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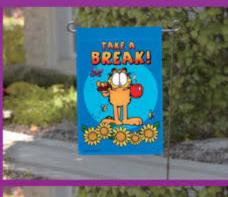




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EDITOR'S NOTE

Written by James A. Baggett Photography by Bob Stefko



ABOVE: Contributing editor Lauren Springer Ogden welcomes Country Gardens® editor James A. Baggett to the garden she shares with her husband and a pair of Great Pyrenees in Fort Collins, Colorado. She is the coauthor of books, including Waterwise Plants for Sustainable Gardens (Timber Press).

Meet *the* Undaunted Gardener

Who says you can't improve on a classic?

Our friend and contributing editor Lauren Springer Ogden most certainly did improve on a classic when she thoughtfully revised her best-selling book The Undaunted Gardener: Planting for Weather-Resilient Beauty (Fulcrum Publishing), originally published in 1994. Engaging, lyrical, and often quite humorous, Lauren's newest edition provides practical and environmental perspectives, describes a myriad of well-adapted plants for the home landscape, and offers a uniquely aesthetic approach to gardening in a challenging climate. And she should know. Lauren's suburban garden on the edge of Fort Collins, Colorado, teems with wildlife, as it borders a river corridor and wild land stretches to the west and north for hundreds of miles. Her top two most-limiting outside forces in her garden: deer and drought. Included in the book is a list of plants Lauren has observed over the deer-filled years that seem to be less appealing to what she calls the "lovely yet highly destructive interlopers." And, with this new edition, she has become even more stringent in categorizing plants as truly drought-tolerant. To be considered drought-tolerant, a plant needs to grow well on 1 inch of water total—rain and/or irrigation—every two weeks during the hottest stretch of a summer. "I'm the same plant-mad, obsessive gardener who tries almost anything and who kills an inordinate number of plants or yanks them for lackluster performance or for sheer impatience," she writes. "I design with plant and site in mind rather than around hardscape or following arbitrary artistic rules. My gardens are filled to the brim with the generosity of plants that are happy to grow there." Find out more about her plant-driven perspectives on page 112.

For more information, see Resources on page 110.



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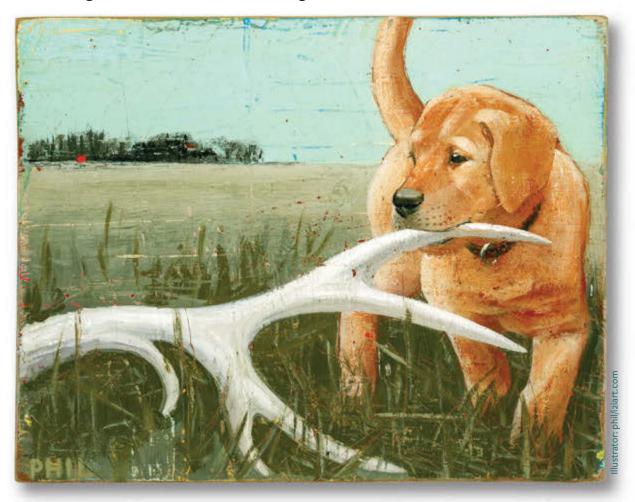
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Pilot on Board

Hunting takes on a different meaning when our Lab heads out into the field.



AAH, THE JOY OF A PUPPY! Our household has a puppy again, so we've rolled up the rugs, stowed the leather shoes on the highest closet shelf, and bravely opened up the house to our new fox-red English Labrador Retriever puppy, Pilot.

On the day that my husband, Doug, and I went to pick up Pilot, we met other puppies that were destined to be pheasant, duck, and quail hunters. In the group of happy families struggling to hold their wiggly puppy, Pilot was the only dog who was going to become a shed hunter.

The whitetail bucks that call our woods and fields home lose their antlers in late winter and early spring. These bony castoffs are called sheds, because shedding antlers is what deer do—after carrying around their heavy headgear for months, one day the antlers simply drop off.

Bucks are described not by their weight or height but by size of their racks. Count the prongs or points. Some bucks may sport six- or eight-point antlers. Others carry a veritable trellis on their heads. But come spring, regardless of the

number of points, the boys drop their antlers in what must feel like a lovely, lightheaded moment of freedom.

Mike Stewart, owner of Wildrose Kennels in Oxford, Mississippi, where Pilot was bred and born, trains hunting dogs. His kennel has produced what he calls "Gentleman's Gun Dogs" since 1972. Wildrose Kennels breeds and trains imported British and Irish Labrador Retrievers for water fowling (ducks, geese) and upland hunting (dove, quail, pheasant). The same talents that make his dogs great huntersintelligence, trainability, and calm temperament—also make these Labs excellent service dogs, diabetic alert dogs, and adventure dogs. And yes, their talents can be adapted to finding the quiet quarry of shed antlers.

Stewart picked up a rubber antler and showed us the liquid antler scent that you dab onto it to start the training. It looks like an antler and it smells like an antler. And when you toss it or hide it, Labs do what they love best: retrieve it.

It doesn't take long for a well-trained pup to graduate to the real thing. For the fun of discovery, a kind word, and a pat on the head, we learned that a Lab will do just about anything.

Finding sheds is more than a
Saturday afternoon activity. It's a
sport that's called, appropriately,
shed hunting. And like the elusive
morel, there are lots of theories about
where and how to find sheds. I've
found slender white antlers lying in
grassy open fields as well as nestled
amid the leaf litter in the woods. I
found one shed under a hedge apple
tree in the bare dark dirt, its stark
whiteness like a beacon on the ground.

Our antler obsession is purely decorative. We collect and display them in a large wooden bowl on our

kitchen island. (We admit to buying them at shops and online, so we don't limit the hunt to woods and fields.)

Antlers are beautiful—they are smooth and cool, like alabaster. And unlike ivory (which is from nonshedding tusks), sheds are from a sustainable resource. As I arrange our shed collection in their wooden bowl, it makes me think of Gaston, the character in Disney's Beauty and the Beast, who uses "antlers in all my decorating."

And now we have a professional shed hunter living under our roof.

So in the crisp mornings of early spring, Doug and I will head out into the woods accompanied by our rubber-antler-trained dog, Pilot.

Together we will comb the woods and fields in search of cast-off antlers

"There are worse things than spending a day hiking with an eager dog crisscrossing the ground in front of you."

from whitetail deer. And if we come up empty-handed, that's cool, too. There are worse things than spending a day hiking with an eager dog crisscrossing the ground in front of you.

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PLANTINGS

Written by Ruth Rogers Clausen

Magnolia Mystique

These ancient plants are among the most popular garden shrubs and trees.

THE NEXT TIME YOU inhale the sweet fragrance of magnolia blossoms, consider this: Fossil remains of magnolias have been identified and dated to millions of years ago, a time when dinosaurs walked the Earth. This realization makes the heady scent of magnolias even more intoxicating.

Named for the French doctor and botanist Pierre Magnol, magnolias have the largest flowers and leaves of any hardy tree. They can grow to an impressive 80 feet tall. They belong to the Magnoliaceae, a primitive family that also includes tulip poplar (Liriodendron) and similar Michelia, both prized for their timber. The 125 or so species have a disparate natural range, from eastern Asia to the Malaysian Archipelago, and in eastern North America from southern Canada south through Florida to Mexico, the West Indies, and Central America. In these places they thrive in light woodlands, in scrubby areas, and along damp riverbanks.



From an evolutionary point of view, these flowering plants are considered ancient, as are conifers, with which they share some traits. For example, many magnolia species are evergreen; they also have a woody, central conelike structure of seed-bearing carpels. In magnolias, flower parts that normally would be considered sepals and petals are impossible to differentiate and are called tepals. Without protective sepals, the buds are enclosed in deciduous fuzzy perules (look-alike sepals). The tepals, held in two whorls of three to six each, surround a spiral of stamens and the carpel cone. When the seeds ripen, the carpels split, exposing pink, red, or orange seeds, each attached to a hairlike strand on which they dangle in the wind for efficient seed dispersal. Pollination is the work of primitive flower beetles that access the open blooms with easy-to-reach pollen (when magnolias evolved, bees and butterflies had not, although they get in the act today). Although lacking nectar, the flowers produce abundant supplies of nutrient-rich pollen.

Many species and numerous hybrids and cultivars find their way into gardens today, where they are appreciated for showy, elegant, and often fragrant flowers. Cup- or saucershape, chalice- or star-shape, the large blooms are mostly held erect. Flowers appear before or with the young foliage in deciduous species, but most evergreen and a few deciduous ones bloom later. Leaves are oval to oblong. Evergreen foliage is leathery and deep green, often decorated with a rusty-red indumentum of hairs on the undersides; some species display yellow fall color.

Continued on page 12

Country Gardens Spring (March) 2015



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PLANTINGS

Continued from page 10

GROWING AND MAINTENANCE:

Magnolias thrive in slightly acid, rich fertile soil that is high in moistureretaining humus. Amend most soils liberally with well-rotted compost or organic material at planting time, along with extra grit to facilitate improved drainage in heavy clay soils. A sunny or very lightly shaded position is best, avoiding frost pockets (the flowers turn black if frosted) or very windy places. Since most woody plants are grown in containers today, either spring or fall planting is acceptable; avoid summer plantings that might dry out. Be alert for plants that have been greenhouseraised but not hardened off; new growth is vulnerable to frost damage. Dig a large, wide hole for the carefully teased roots; backfill, firm, and water well.

PRUNING: Apart from routine pruning of dead, damaged, diseased, or dying branches, it is seldom necessary to prune evergreen species. Springbloomers may be trimmed after bloom in late spring to early summer. Be sure to prune young magnolias to encourage upward growth.

IN THE GARDEN: The size of your garden will determine which magnolias to grow and where to put them. In large landscapes, they can be massed in the distance, planted as specimens in lawns or parkland, or planted as an allee. Choose species or selections that need space to display their elegance in a wider landscape, such as southern magnolia (M. grandiflora), cucumber tree (M. acuminata), or M. campbellii. In smaller settings, magnolias do well in mixed borders and shrub collections. M. 'Ricki', M. 'Jane', and many saucer magnolia (M. × soulangeana) cultivars are appropriate. Avoid areas that receive constant cultivation, as brittle magnolia roots resent disturbance. For decks, patios, and sunrooms, magnolias are amenable to growing in containers. Star (M. stellata) cultivars and 'Ann' hybrid magnolias, along with 'Little Gem' southern magnolia are good subjects. Be sure the container size is large enough to accommodate the plant's quite rapid growth. Protect the roots from baking in summer and freezing in winter.

For more information, see Resources on page 110.



Common name: Magnolia Botanical name: Magnolia species, hybrids, and cultivars Hardiness: Zones 3–9 Conditions: Most magnolias prefer a sunny or lightly shaded spot where soil is damp but welldrained, with plenty of humus to retain water. Some species thrive in drier conditions.

Bloom time: Late spring to early summer

Height: 8-70 feet; to 50 feet wide, depending on species and cultivar Best feature: The evergreen species are noted for their beautiful leathery, dark green leaves, often with a thick indumentum of rusty hairs on the underside. Magnolia blooms are mostly waxy with tepals (no differentiation between petals and sepals). Shape varies by species: cup- or saucer-shape, sometimes both together; or star- or gobletshape, mostly in white, pinks, and purples. Yellow-flower selections are less common. Flowers of many magnolias are fragrant.

Magnolia Magic for Different Seasons

SPRING-BLOOMING, DECIDUOUS

M. 'Butterflies' has cup-shape, pale yellow 4- to 5-inch flowers with red stamens. Blooms on young plants.

M. 'Elizabeth' is slow-growing to 30 feet. Soft yellow cup flowers to 6 inches across at leaf-break. Perhaps the bestknown yellow. Zones 6–9.

M. 'Galaxy' has 3- to 5-inch purplish-pink chalice flowers before the leaves. 40 feet tall. Zones 6–9.

M. 'Gold Star' is very early blooming with pale creamyyellow stars. Good for limited space. 15 feet. Zones 4–9.

M. 'Jon Jon' is widely grown in northern Florida. Its white

goblets are flushed purple at the base and appear later than *M. stellata* or *M.* × *soulangeana*. Some yellow fall color. Blooms on young plants. Slow-growing to 30 feet. Zones 6–9.

Little Girl hybrids: Bred at the National Arboretum, these hybrids bloom a little later and thus avoid late frosts. 'Jane': Reddish-purple with white inside, very fragrant cup flowers. 12 feet. 'Randy': Purple stars with white inside. 10 feet. 'Pinkie': Light-purplish to pink flowers, white within. 10 feet. All Zones 5–9.

M. × **loebneri** (M. kobus × M. stellata) Star-shape fragrant flowers 3–5 inches across, mostly white but sometimes

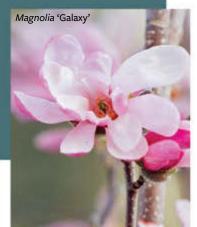
purple outside. To 30 feet. Zones 5–9. 'Leonard Messel' and 'Merrill' are reliable cultivars.

M. stellata—Star magnolia. Star-shape, erect, fragrant white flowers to 5 inches across, with 12–15 tepals. To 20 feet tall. Zones 4–8. 'Centennial' and 'Royal Star' are fine cultivars.

M. virginiana—Sweetbay, swamp magnolia. Semievergreen in warm regions. Deep cup-shape, creamy-white, strongly lemonscented flowers. To 30 feet. Zones 6–9.

LATE-BLOOMING, EVERGREEN

M. grandiflora—Southern magnolia, bull bay. Fragrant, goblet-shape, pure-white flowers and glossy, leathery, deep green leaves. To 60 feet. Zones 7–9. 'Bracken's Brown Beauty' and 'Edith Bogue' are popular cultivars.



BACKYARD ALMANAC

Written by Anne Raver



The Spread of the Starling

Adaptable and resourceful, the European starling has been so successfully introduced around the world that it is considered an invasive bird in North America.

IT'S ALMOST FASHIONABLE to love starlings now. I know, it's like the people who make you feel guilty for not loving a pit bull. If you still think those cute starling faces might open their jaws and go for your dog's jugular (as they've done three times for my dog, Wolfie), you'll probably be thought of as one of those uninformed humans who want to shoot starlings at the bird feeder. I confess I've thought of shooting them myself, when they mob the woodpeckers trying to get a little much-needed fuel at the suet feeders in winter and spring when there isn't much to eat. And it would be legal because the starling is an exotic invasive species, but with my aim, I'd probably shoot the woodpecker by mistake.

Besides, you have to admire this bird's wily intelligence and communal nature. I've watched four or five starlings gang up on a big red-bellied woodpecker from both front and behind as he tries to get a meal.

Not as timid as the smaller downy or hairy woodpeckers, our red-bellied fellow is a little bigger than the starlings, and his beak is longer. I've watched him use it fearlessly, jabbing at the mob like Zorro, while clutching the cage with his strong toes. But eventually, outnumbered and exhausted, he flies off with an empty belly.

It's only when these black birds, which are spotted white in fall and winter and acquire a beautiful greenish-purple sheen during breeding season, are finished pigging out that the rest of the birds get to eat. (The cardinals perch in the forsythia, the nuthatches and chickadees in the chestnut tree.) And we run out to fill the feeders.

I have to admit that I love the starling's voice. At first light, I hear their characteristic whistles,

AND WHO CAN DENY
THEIR BEAUTIFUL VOICES?
COUSIN TO THE MYNAH
BIRD, THEY MIMIC NOT
ONLY THE SONGS OF
OTHER BIRDS BUT ALSO
TRAFFIC NOISE, SIRENS,
AND HUMAN SPEECH.

chortlings, whirrs, and zssts! as they build their nests and get down to the task of rearing the next generation of bully birds under the eaves of our barn every spring. (We sleep in a loftlike apartment in the barn, so their rustling and chatter are quite close.)

Or "rebuild" their nests, I should say. From a third to half of the females return to the same nesting site every year. It's the male that begins the process, carrying some grass or even a feather into the bower (this guy knows what counts), then perching on a nearby electric line or roof ridge and lifting and lowering his shiny black wings while whistling and singing his head off to catch his lady's attention. If she accepts him as her mate, the female helps build their sloppy nest, often removing half the stuff her guy has brought in, until it's up to her standards.

Which leads me to the worst part: Like the loathsome English sparrow, starlings will often destroy the nests, including eggs and nestlings, of less aggressive birds, such as tree swallows, woodpeckers, and bluebirds, in order to lay their own eggs-from four to seven pretty blue ones—in the same cavity. They will even destroy one another's nests, fighting to the death over a favored site. As others have said, the European or common starling (Sturnus vulgaris) is a lot like white settlers who first stepped on the pristine shores of North America and proceeded to kill

Country Gardens Spring (March) 2015

BACKYARD ALMANAC

anything that stood in their way.

Some 100 European starlings were released in Central Park in 1890 by a misguided group called the American Acclimatization Society, which wanted to introduce into the New World every bird Shakespeare mentioned in his plays and verse. The starling is mentioned at the beginning of Henry IV, when Hotspur, angered that the king has refused to pay the ransom that would release his brother-in-law Mortimer from prison, decides he will drive the king mad with a bird: "Nay, I'll have a starling shall be taught to speak nothing but 'Mortimer."

Since that first release in New York City, European starlings have increased to about 200 million birds all over the lower 48 states, most of Canada, and eastern Alaska. They plague cities and towns with their corrosive droppings, cause planes to crash—they get sucked into the engines—and eat or otherwise wreak 800 million dollars' worth of damage to crops each year. They not only love the crops, but they steal food from cattle troughs. The nervy birds bathe in the cattle's water and perch on their backs.

Flocks of 40 at a time will descend on our bird feeders and gobble up the sunflower seeds, even opening the feeders to release the supply onto the ground for a frenzy of feeding. They are as clever as crows, too, and they often open the suet cages, flying off with great chunks of peanut-butter laden fat and cornmeal.

Their voracious appetites have a good side, as Rachel Carson, who championed starlings, reminded her readers in *Silent Spring*. The biologist who awakened the world to the dangers of DDT captured the curious waddle of the bird, which does not

hop, but "hurries with jerky steps about the farms and gardens in the summer time, carrying more than 100 loads of destructive insects per day to his screaming offspring."

Starlings have another advantage. Their powerful jaw muscles can open their bills wide rather than simply clamping them shut, which helps excavate grubs and beetles from lawns and fields (and open bird feeders). And who can deny their beautiful voices? Cousin to the mynah bird, they mimic not only the songs of other birds but also traffic noise, sirens, and human speech. Many people who adopt starlings usually baby birds fallen from nests—teach them to say things like "Kiss me," "Whatcha doin'?" and "Good boy!"

Starlings are also good at mimicking human tunes. Poppy, who fell out of his nest at the Dallas-Fort Worth airport, was adopted by flight attendant Lisa Dragonetti of Tampa, who taught him how to whistle "Dixie" and a little bit of Mozart's Eine Kleine Nachtmusik.

Mozart had his own pet starling, which famously sang a few bars of the last movement of the *Piano Concerto No. 17 in G Major*—in G sharp. Mozart thought it so clever that he transcribed it. He may



THE NEST IS KIND OF A SLOPPY MESS OF GRASSES, FEATHERS, EVEN PLASTIC, NOT THE TIDY LITTLE WOVEN BASKETS THAT BLUEBIRDS MAKE.

also have composed his sextet *Ein musikalischer Spass* (A Musical Joke) as an ode to his pet's propensity to sing off-key.

And who cannot be thrilled by the murmurations of starlings when thousands are migrating in spring and fall? They rise in a cloud from trees and fields, swirling and turning, spiraling down and up like dark tornados. Physicists are fascinated by their precision, each starling spaced a wingspan from the other, shifting and turning in an instant, at some unknown signal, perhaps an alarm sounded at the sighting of some falcon or hawk.

So, as much as I want to loathe this pesky bird, I sit down on my garden wall and love it.



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Gardens



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Send us your name, address, and telephone number, as well as color photographs, color printouts, or digital photos of your garden, a rough landscape plan, and a brief description of your garden or garden room.

WHERE TO SEND IT

Garden Awards, Code: CG Country Gardens 1716 Locust St. Des Moines, IA 50309-3023

TRADING POST

Written and produced by Risa Quade Photography by Jacob Fox

Make Gardening Easier

Avoid blisters and strain with these cool new ergonomic tools and products for the yard.

TWO-FACED Two-in-one tools make This jumbo-capacity

Two-in-one tools make toiling in the dirt less cumbersome, especially when they have an ergonomic grip and no-slip handle. \$9.99; ComfortGEL Hoe & Cultivator—Corona; coronatoolsusa.com; 800/847-7863

This jumbo-capacity scoop makes quick work of transferring soil, mulch, birdseed, or even ice melt. The special ergonomic handle keeps it comfortable. \$11.99; ComfortGEL Extra Large Scoop—Corona; coronatoolsusa.com; 800/847-7863



SNIP IN COMFORT

To absorb the pressure of repetitive squeezing motions, this garden scissors has comfortable slip-proof handles. The stainless-steel blades are ideal for lighter pruning jobs, such as cutting twine or herbs and flowers. \$11.99; Good Grips Garden Scissors—OXO; oxo.com; 800/545-4411

.

HAND BREAK Strong and sharp, these blades are five times harder than steel and stay sharper longer than other pruners. It easily switches from an anvil to ratchet pruner with AirShoc ergonomic grip. What's more, the nonstick blades resist resins and other sticky residues. \$14.99; Scotts Ultimate Non-stick Titanium Dual-Action Pruner—Home Depot; homedepot.com; 800/466-3337

HARD TO REACH

Anyone who has tried to trim tree branches knows the challenges to arms, shoulders, and neck. To the rescue: this bypass pruner/branch saw with a telescopic aluminum shaft that extends to 12 feet. AirShoc impactresistant grips help you hold on and direct the adjustable pivot head while a branch hook reduces fatigue. Microban protection prevents the growth of bacteria and fungus on the blade. \$69.99; Scotts Ultimate Non-Stick Titanium Bonded Telescopic Pruner/Saw-Home Depot; homedepot .com; 800/466-3337



This wheelbarrow/dolly combo can lift, carry, and move almost anything around the yard while lightening every load with its two oversize, balanced wheels that make 300 pounds feel more like 25. The tub shape concentrates the center of gravity directly over the wheels so it will not tip over. The cart is narrow enough to pass through fence gates and doors. It also comes with a sturdy mesh sling, steel rings, and cylinderholding accessories to help you carry the heavy stuff, such as propane tanks, potted trees, and boulders. \$159.90; AeroCart—WORX; worx.com; 866/354-9679



Getting on your knees—and back up again—just got easier. This kneeler gives you extra-stable support. Welded, wobble-free supports are topped by ergonomic Radius handles to increase leverage and reduce strain on hands and wrists. The thick contoured foam pad cradles knees while you work. \$69.95; GardenEase Kneeler-Gardener's Supply Co.; gardeners.com; 800/876-5520

HOW WE ROLL

No more bending over to gather fruit and nuts with this tool, which collects with a quick-rolling motion as the flexible wires of the cage capture small objects on the ground. To empty, simply spread the wires and dump. \$54; Nut & Fruit Gatherer—Lee Valley; leevalley.com; 800/871-8158

Continued on page 18

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TRADING POST

Continued from page 16

SQUEEZE RELIEF

Give control to one finger and eliminate stress to the hand, especially beneficial for arthritic hands. The One-Touch nozzle relieves hand fatigue from watering over long periods and comes in a variety of options, including fan nozzle and rain wand. Prices start at \$15.49; One Touch Hose Nozzle-Dramm; amazon.com



Take the challenge out of watering hanging baskets and filling bird feeders with this handy pulley. An internal ratcheting mechanism locks or releases at any height with a simple tug. \$14.95; Hanging Basket Pulley-Lee Valley; leevalley.com; 800/267-8735



LIFT & SUPPORT

Designed to reduce fatigue by distributing the weight of weed trimmers and other large power tools over your upper body, this sling also comes with vibrationdampening technology. A quick-release comfort strap and contoured design help keep you comfortable. \$26.50; Comfort-Tech Weed Trimmer & Utility Sling-Lee Valley; leevalley.com; 800/267-8735



Clean up the yard in half the time with this handy device that makes raking and garden cleanup remarkably easier. Simply bend the giant circle into a taco shape and secure, rake in your leaves or debris, then tip into the bag or bin. The Leaf Loader fits any bag or can and pops open and folds flat in seconds. How could something so simple be so novel? \$29.95 (plus \$9.95 shipping and handling); Leaf Loader—leafloader.com; 877/699-6835



Narrow enough to work between shrubs or behind outdoor furniture, this long-handled rake enables the gardener to tidy those normally hard-to-reach nooks and crannies in the yard. \$9.98; Ames 8-inch Poly Shrub Rake—Home Depot; homedepot.com; 800/466-3337

BIG SPACES

For those large, open areas of the yard, this oversize yet lightweight rake makes you more efficient. \$14.95; Ames 26-inch Steel Handle Poly Leaf Rake-Home Depot; homedepot.com; 800/466-3337

JACK-OF-ALL-TRADES

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transplant blade

with serrated edge,

tools around the garden when this titanium bonded tool features a trowel/

EASY CARRYING

Lugging heavy bags of mulch and soil becomes convenient with this genius clip. Not only does it cinch bags safely closed to prevent spillage, but it also makes transporting opened bags around the garden much easier. \$14.95; Bag Clip—The Handy Camel; thehandycamel.com; 816/651-2568

ENGINEERED FOR POWER

This lopper maximizes the way a body interacts with a tool. An elliptical gear with an integrated cam mechanism optimizes power, providing more cutting strength than a standard single-pivot tool to help reduce fatigue. The blade design balances sharpness, strength. low friction, and rust resistance. Enlarged handle grips improve control and help prevent blisters. \$38.99; PowerGear2 Lopper—Fiskars; fiskars .com; 866/348-5661

tools!

these garder

GET AROUND EASIER

Forget those tipsy wheelbarrow loads with this garden cart. Large bicycle-style wheels allow for easy rolling over rough ground, and the unique grip design makes it easier to maneuver and dump without losing control. \$84.97; Ames Total Control Garden Cart—Home Depot: homedepot.com; 800/466-3337

AMES

A day of trimming woody stems calls for a nonslip soft grip and hardened Tefloncoated steel blades designed for heavy-duty pruning jobs on branches up to 3/4 inch in diameter. \$11.99; Good Grips Bypass Pruner—OXO; oxo.com; 800/545-4411

SMOOTH CUTTING

a notch for cutting twine, a weeding tip, a measuring rule, and a sharp straight edge to cut sod? But wait, there's more! It also has Microban to help prevent the growth of bacteria and fungus! \$13.75; Miracle-Gro Hori Hori Multi-Tool-Home Depot; homedepot.com; 800/466-3337

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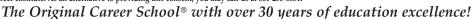
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BREAKING GROUND

Written and produced by Danny C. Flanders Photography by Erica George Dines



The New American Farmer

An Atlanta couple is on a mission to reconnect city folk with locally grown food and those who tend the land.







JOE REYNOLDS AND JUDITH WINFREY sink their hands into rows of rich soil every day in the often-blistering Georgia heat. They're literally cultivating new life in concrete jungles and connecting consumers with growers, with each other, and ultimately with the land.

The husband-and-wife entrepreneurs lease several acres near downtown Atlanta from a homeowners association, land set aside for residents years ago as a working organic farm known as Gaia Gardens. There, the couple operates one of the largest Community Supported Agriculture farms in metro Atlanta, with more than 100 members who buy seasonal food each week directly from their business, called Love Is Love Farm.

"What sets this farm apart is its urban-agriculture concept," Reynolds says. "People in the heart of the city can experience farming firsthand."

That happens in several ways. Every week at the Decatur-area farm, members come to the farm to pick up fresh seasonal fruits, vegetables, and herbs. While at the farm or at the East Atlanta Village Farmers Market, where the couple also sells their produce, there's a rich teaching opportunity in this close farmer-consumer relationship about how that tasty food was grown.

A certified organic farmer, Reynolds grows more than 40 different crops annually using environmentally responsible agricultural practices. Those practices include crop rotation, cover-cropping, and labor-intensive but, to the couple, rewarding-handweeding, seeding, and harvesting. Within the garden are 12 different fields, each about 5,000 square feet, with crops swapped out annually to avoid insect and fertility problems. "We're using traditional farm methods, but there's a humongous diversity in what is grown," he says, citing crops ranging from arugula, basil, beans, and tomatoes to figs, muscadine grapes, strawberries, and watermelons. "We

try to grow as many things as we can without being overwhelmed."

Reynolds and Winfrey, assisted by several workers and volunteers, grow all crops from seed, with transplants started in their greenhouse. Reynolds was even awarded a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant to study whether plastic-covered hoop houses conserve water and heat. He's been able to jump-start cucumbers and tomatoes earlier in the growing season using this method—one of many experiments in the five years since moving Love Is Love Farm to Gaia Gardens. Before that, the couple operated their farm in nearby Douglas County but was forced to move when the farm was ravaged by a flood. "This has all been a real personal growth experience for both Joe and me," says Winfrey, an Atlanta native. "We've seen people change and do some really productive things."

Reynolds, a self-described "military brat" who moved around a lot and studied anthropology in college,





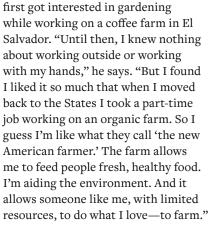




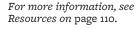








What he loves even more is the rapid rate at which the local-food movement has grown. "It's just exploded in the last five to 10 years," Reynolds says. "It's now a part of city planning, allowing for urban farms. School systems finally have a way to get local food into their cafeterias, and it's more accessible to the poor through food stamps. The bottom line is that more and more people are passionate about forming a relationship with their food source."

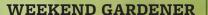












Written and produced by Marty Ross Photography by Karla Conrad

Home Tweet Home

Here's a bird-friendly project just in time for spring.



If there were LEED certification for energy-efficient and environmentally friendly birdhouse and bird-feeder designs, Rebecca Nickols would qualify for a platinum award—with extra points for style.

Rebecca was looking for a creative outlet from her job as an intensivecare nurse in Strafford, Missouri, near Springfield, when she came up with the idea of making a livingroof birdhouse. Her garden, full of flowers, vegetables, and mature trees, was already certified as a National Wildlife Federation habitat and a Monarch Waystation, but she wanted to do more. She participated in a class on living wreaths made with succulents, "and it just kind of sparked an interest," she says.

Rebecca's green-roof birdhouse, planted with hardy sedums, was designed in collaboration with her husband, Jeff, an electrophysiology lab nurse. After they made the first birdhouse, "I said, 'You know, people would like this," Rebecca says, and the couple launched a hobby business, Rebecca's Bird Gardens. They sell their cedar birdhouses at the Farmers Market of the Ozarks in Springfield and through an Etsy shop.

"It's fun to have a creative outlet. and it's completely different from what I do for a living," Rebecca says. "They are polar opposites."



Living-roof birdhouse

Buildings with living roofs are well-known for their ability to filter rainwater, clean and cool the air, and reduce energy costs. A green-roof birdhouse topped with a planting of hardy, no-maintenance sedums will not reduce your home's energy bills, but it shows you're environmentally up-to-date. This living-roof birdhouse—designed with a small hole for bluebirds, titmice, chickadees, wrens, and nuthatches—has 2 inches of planting material on the roof. A moisture barrier under the soil keeps the nestlings cozy and dry inside.





Step 1: Cut the moisture barrier to fit the roof; set it in place.

Step 2: Cover the roof most of the way with moistened potting soil.



- and gables) Moisture barrier such as roofing paper or plastic
- Potting soil (a soilless mix)
- Sphagnum moss
- Poultry wire, to secure the potting soil and sphagnum moss on the roof (Rebecca Nickols uses 20-gauge, 2-inch mesh wire)
- Stapler
- Scissors
- Screwdriver
- Asparagus-cutting tool or dandelion weeder
- Sedum plants
- · Cross-section of a small branch to make a knob and a twig for a perch (optional)
- Flowerpot for the birdhouse's porch (optional)
- Wood glue (optional)
- Pole or pipe for mounting the birdhouse



Step 3: Soak sphagnum moss in water for 30 minutes to moisten it thoroughly. Wring it out with your hands, and then pack it thickly onto the soil in the roof.



Step 4: Staple poultry wire on top to hold the sphagnum moss in place.



Step 5: Trim the poultry wire back to the edges of the roof.



Step 6: With a screwdriver or an asparagus-cutting tool, poke even more sphagnum moss through the mesh in the poultry wire to fill any gaps or thin spots. You should not be able to see the potting soil underneath.



Poke the asparaguscutting tool into the moss to make room for the sedum roots and tuck the plants in, firming them with your fingers as you go. Rebecca uses hardy sedums in her livingroof birdhouses.



knob with a screw on the side, so you can open the birdhouse to clean it out. The perch under the entry hole is optional. Birds don't need it.

For more information, see Resources on page 110.

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ABOVE LEFT: Jennifer designed her kitchen garden, or potager, in Columbus, Ohio, to create a special place for growing herbs and vegetables. It's both a focal point of her garden and a pleasing landscape viewed from many rooms of her home, as well as from the deck for entertaining, which overlooks the garden from this perspective. "I consider this a tasting garden," Jennifer says. "Sometimes our meals are unplanned, and we pick what's ready that day." **ABOVE RIGHT:** Early morning harvest: Jennifer relies on her potager to nourish her family with flavorful cooking ingredients and to nourish her love of beauty. She believes that useful gardens should feed the body as well as the soul. "I don't just pick for eating. When I harvest, I'm also picking to put flowers in the vase," she says.

IF YOU ENJOY GROWING and harvesting the flavorful bounty of edibles season after season, you already know the value of having a kitchen garden, or *potager*. If you're like garden designer and author Jennifer Bartley, you also believe that a food garden with vegetables, salad greens, herbs, fruits, and berries should be as eye-catching as an ornamental landscape or perennial border.

Jennifer is a landscape architect and principal of Granville, Ohio-based American Potager, a design studio founded on the belief that gardens can be beautiful, productive, and restorative. She has authored two books on kitchen gardens, is widely sought after by design clients, and is a popular speaker around the United States. Yet it is in her own suburban backyard where Jennifer's research and creativity are most personally expressed.

"My potager evolved over many years but began with a primary goal: To create a special place to grow herbs and vegetables that I use on a daily basis," she says of the 1,200-square-foot enclosed kitchen garden that is the focal point of her landscape.

Twenty years ago, after living all around the country and raising five children with her husband, Terry Bartley, Jennifer and her family returned to central Ohio. They moved into a new, Colonial-style house with not a single tree or shrub in the landscape, located close to the town where Jennifer spent her childhood playing in woodland ravines and on ancient Native American land. As an adult, she realized how profoundly those experiences shaped her relationship with the environment.

Jennifer originally studied nursing, but the process of creating her own Zone 6 garden inspired her return to Ohio State University to train as a landscape architect. "I'm very appreciative of that design background, which taught me how to think of gardens spatially and how to create

rooms and enclosures within the garden," she says.

The walled gardens of France, including centuries-old monastery gardens, drew Jennifer to Europe while doing research for her Master's thesis. Many attributes of historic French kitchen gardens inform the modern American gardens she designs today.

"In the Midwest, we think we should grow our kitchen gardens like the fields around us—with everything planted in rows. And, historically, the English separated the messy kitchen garden from the estate—it was located far from sight. But the French always understood the connection between what is growing in the garden and what is served at the table."

The design and construction of her ornamental kitchen garden became part of Jennifer's graduate work, later published in her first book, *Designing the New Kitchen Garden: An American Potager Handbook* (Timber Press; 2006).

Garden at a Glance

Jardin Potager

- 1. Yellow marigold
- 2. Thai basil
- 3. Anaheim pepper
- 4. King Richard leeks
- 5. Emerite pole beans
- 6. Tomato 'Tomatoberry Garden'
- 7. Sweet genovese basil
- 8. Garlic
- 9. Zucchini 'Plato'
- 10. Nasturtium
- 11. Okra
- 12. Dill hart's lettuce
- 13. Cutting celery
- 14. Jalafuego pepper
- 15. Zinnia 'Double Zahara Strawberry
- 16. Tomato 'Orange Banana'
- 17. Dinosour kale
- 18. Tomato 'Valencia'
- 19. Long green improved cucumber
- 20. Sweet alyssum
- 21. Scarlet runner bean
- 22. Heirloom green basil
- 23. Kale 'Rainbow'
- 24. Purple bush bean
- 25. Tall zinnia
- **26.** Hart's mix lettuce
- 27. Zinnia 'Granny's Bouquet'
- 28. Flat leaf Italian parsley
- 29. Spanish lavender
- 30. Tomato 'Chocolate Cherry'
- 31. Romaine
- 32. Red oakleaf
- 33. Eggplant 'Fairy Tale'
- 35. Kentucky colonel mint

Jardin potager is the French phrase for kitchen garden. The phrase literally means a garden for the soup pot. It's a designed seasonal kitchen garden filled with fruits, vegetables, herbs, and edible and nonedible flowers that dictates what is on the menu or plopped in a vase; the soup of the day changes based on what is growing in the garden. The potager is more than a kitchen garden; it is a philosophy of living that is dependent on the seasons and the immediacy of the garden.

—Jennifer Bartley

DESIGN NOTEBOOK





To create it, Jennifer designated a 30×40-foot area spanning the width of her house. A friend with a backhoe offered to excavate and level the site. She sketched out raised beds and paths, borrowing from the traditional quadripartite design, which fits neatly into the rectangular space. "Quadripartite is a foursquare design divided by two main paths with a water feature in the center," she explains. Instead of a water feature, Jennifer placed a diamond-shape central bed planted with herbs.

Upright wood boards contain each of four beds, approximately 5×11 feet, with one angled corner.

Jennifer allowed for 3-foot-wide paths (perfect for a wheelbarrow or for two to walk comfortably, she says). The charming pathways, laid in a running bond pattern, were built with tons of crushed rock and 2,500 used bricks, which Jennifer and her sons salvaged locally and spent hours cleaning.

Like the unstained picket fence that

surrounds the potager, the weathered brick paths are entirely appropriate for her home's Colonial architecture. "Your kitchen garden can be informed by the style of your house," she says. "For example, if I had a Victorian home, wrought-iron fencing would be a good fencing choice."

North and south gates provide access into and out of the potager. Yews, boxwood, and heirloom peonies line the interior of the fence while a mixed perennial border grows outside. "That's where I've added plants that attract 'beneficials'—birds and insects. I try to have something blooming all the time for that reason," she says.

Seasonal plantings have changed, but what is consistent is the sensory pleasures of taste and ornamentation that this potager provides. "While the materials are simple and rustic, the design elements combine architecture with plants to create a sense of order," Jennifer says. "It gives me a tremendous amount of joy."

> For more information, see Resources on page 110.

The overview as seen from an upstairs window reveals the beautiful symmetry of Jennifer's potager design. Each four raised bed features a cobalt-blue teepee-style trellis for climbing beans and peas. Annual lettuce greens, herbs, root vegetables, and edible—as well as nonedible—flowers fill the beds, while more permanent plants grow inside the perimeter fence.



















Create Your Own American Potager Old-world monastery gardens

inspire today's useful and ornamental kitchen gardens, says Jennifer Bartley, author of Designing the New Kitchen Garden: An American Potager Handbook (Timber Press; 2006) and The Kitchen Gardener's Handbook (Timber Press; 2010). "Early kitchen gardens were healing gardens, both visually beautiful and practical," she says. Follow Jennifer's design steps to create a kitchen garden that's both practical and lovely:

- 1. Plant close to your house. Locate the kitchen garden where you can view it from indoors and where you're likely to walk past it every day. Jennifer's potager is planted along the east side of the house, adjacent to the deck where summer grilling and entertaining take place.
- 2. Enclose the garden. "It should be a separate place, an oasis," she says. "When you walk into the garden, the gate snaps behind you and you're carried to another place. You're going into 'paradise,' which is healing, too." In some situations, the fences and walls might be practical for keeping out animals, while in others, hedging or a line of trees suggest a sense of enclosure.
- 3. Incorporate structure. This can be an architectural element—planters that contain clipped boxwood balls or an espaliered fruit tree, for example. Jennifer placed a cobalt-blue bamboo trellis in each of the four raised beds to both provide an architectural detail and to support climbing beans, peas, and other vines. "Don't forget that in some parts of the country, the structure is what looks beautiful during winter when covered in snow."
- 4. Plant edibles and **ornamentals.** Jennifer prefers pairing annual edible crops with annual flowers; likewise, she places perennial edibles like asparagus with perennial flowers like yarrow. This commonsense strategy clusters plants with similar sowing, maintenance, and harvesting needs in the same spot.

Written and produced by Tovah Martin Photography by Kindra Clineff

All-American Daffodils

Gardeners discover that American-bred daffodils are suited for a range of climates as well as offering a surprising palette of color.



FOR DIANNE MRAK, DAFFODILS WERE
her gateway into gardening. When she was a
new mother with a postage stamp-size yard in
Maryland, a friend came over and suggested
pink daffodils for the space. "No such thing,"
responded the novice; everyone knew that yellow
and white are what narcissus are all about. She
was still doubtful when the friend gave her some

bulbs of Narcissus 'Pink Rim', but she planted

them nonetheless. "And that was my introduction

to pink daffodils," Dianne says. The year was 1970,

and she's been fascinated by daffodils ever since.

Soon after, Dianne and her friend attended the Baltimore Daffodil Show, and that was an eye-opener, because 'Pink Rim' was nothing compared to some of the more vivid pink cultivars strutting their stuff at the show. "I was hooked," she recalls. The next year, she planted 'Accent', which was a truer pink. But 'Accent' also had another trait that appealed to Dianne: "It was bred in America."

Although the Netherlands is best known as the producer of spring bulbs by the millions, the Dutch are not the primary breeders of daffodils. Britain, Northern Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States have all been hot spots for narcissus hybridization. When Dianne met and befriended American daffodil breeder Elise Havens from Mitsch Novelty Daffodils in 1973, it all came home. One of the principal players in the field was Elise's father, Grant Mitsch, who began hybridizing daffodils in Oregon in the 1930s, and his family has been breeding narcissus ever since. Grant Mitsch was one of the most prolific producers of American-bred daffodils, working extensively with the triandrus, cyclamineus (the famed 'Jetfire' is a Mitsch introduction), and jonquilla groups. His contribution to the daffodil world tallied 600-plus hybrids, to which Elise and







ABOVE LEFT: Granite rocks became informal walls and backdrops for Dianne Mrak's daffodils. Her emphasis on American-bred daffodils can be seen everywhere, including 'Pineapple Prince' in the foreground of this planting beside a dwarf forsythia with 'Catalyst' (classified as red) in the rear. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Dianne's favorite judging attire is a vest with daffodil embroidery and Nantucket Daffodil Festival badges.

her husband, Richard Havens, added 326 more. These pioneers have been joined by hybridists throughout the country. Not only do they strive to furnish fellow gardeners with the full gamut of colors possible in all divisions of daffodils, but they also want to serve the diverse gardening needs of this country. For example, the fact that jonquils tolerate hot, baking sun as well as cooler climates makes them particularly appropriate for a broad range of growing Zones in this country. More jonquils mean more choices for Americans.

Meanwhile, it was love at first sight between Dianne and daffodil shows, sending her on the track to qualify as a judge. One criterion for daffodil judges is they must personally grow a minimum of 100 different varieties—which posed a major problem because Dianne and her family moved continually. Not to be dissuaded, everywhere she went, the daffodil collection came along. As a result, she observed daffodils under a variety of growing conditions. In particular, she noticed quite a bit of color variability from place to place, especially when she moved from Georgia to Connecticut. Although 'Accent' was pale in Georgia, its color blushed vibrantly in Connecticut. "I was sold on New England," she says. By the time her family moved to their current property in Dover, New Hampshire, in October 2000, she'd ramped up to 1,000 varieties.

What Dianne loves about the American daffodils—"besides the loyalty factor"—is that they are geared toward playing well with











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ABOVE LEFT: In spring, Dianne likes to include the broadest palette possible in her plantings, pairing 'Chromacolor' (introduced by American hybridizer Bill Pannill) and 'Sideling Hill' (created by American Bill Bender) with a deciduous azalea. **ABOVE RIGHT:** 'Creation' is a creamy-white midseason American-bred trumpet with perfect blossoms from debut until fading. **OPPOSITE:** American-bred daffodils with miniature flowers include 'Dainty Miss', 'Motmot', and 'Hummingbird' (all bred by Grant Mitsch) and 'Three of Diamonds' (by Mary Lou Gripshover).

other perennials. Dianne prefers to interplant narcissus rather than devoting a field solely to that one flower. Daffodils and daylilies are an ideal combination, because the daylily foliage masks the daffodils as they bow out while sending their oomph into next year's blossoms. Dianne also pairs her daffodils with shrubs such as azaleas, forsythias, and spring-blooming ornamental fruit trees. Hyacinths and daffodils are a favorite combination, and she also couples camassias and hellebores with her narcissus bulbs. These combinations meshed with her early affinity for pink hybrids, because pink can be an easier color to match. And American breeders were pumping out pink introductions to meet the demand. Another trait that American breeders favor is miniature types—an attribute that works well in

concert with other perennials. Many miniatures bloom early, stretching the daffodil season. Plus, their daintier foliage can be readily camouflaged.

Unfortunately, the Mrak family had a huge setback when their quaint New England Cape burned down in 2006. Undaunted, they rebuilt immediately. Several of the terraced gardens around the house were affected, but Dianne's trove of daffodils still shine, and she keeps abreast of new introductions by American breeders. One thing has changed: Her preferred color range has increased. "In the beginning, it was about pink flowers," she says. "But now I've got yellow fever. Why? Because they come up in spring, and they're the flower of hope."

For more information, see Resources on page 110.



Plant at a Glance American Daffodil

Conditions: Daffodils need good, well-drained soil and a sunny location. They can be planted under deciduous trees, but tree roots might compete with daffodils for moisture and nutrition.

Hardiness: Zones 3–8. The tazetta and bulbocodium divisions perform best in warmer regions.

Planting: Plant the bulbs in autumn when the soil is cool.
October through mid-November is optimal because it leaves time for the root system to develop. Most bulbs should be buried 6–8 inches deep, but miniatures need not go as deep; the rule is 2½ times the height of the bulb.

Watering: In most regions, you can let nature water daffodils. But in areas without spring rain, watering might be necessary. One inch a week is ideal during the growing season.

Fertilizing: Narcissus aficionado Dianne Mrak feeds with a lownitrogen fertilizer such as 5-10-10 or 10-20-20 in March before flowering begins, and she avoids bone meal because it is slow to become available to the plant.

Flowers: Beyond the typical trumpet jutting from a framelike series of six petals typically associated with daffodils, the flowers can have all sorts of spins, including double petals and a large range in size, with blooms standing on stems from 3 inches to 18 inches tall. Miniature versions are a particular focus for American breeders.

Colors: An ever-increasing range of daffodil hues is available, including white, yellow, orange, reddish, pink, and green. American breeders have dedicated their efforts to increasing the color range in all divisions of daffodils. Problems: After a daffodil blossoms, it is essential to leave the foliage intact, allowing it to produce nutrients for next year's flowers. Remove foliage only when it has completely died back. Buy bulbs from a reputable source to avoid viruses and bulb-fly issues.



AS A PROFESSIONAL CONTAINER DESIGNER, I often create extravagant combinations of plants, with layers of shrubs, perennials, and annuals overflowing the pot. However, there is a lot to be said for going solo—just one special plant per pot, especially if you select a small tree or attractive shrub with multiseason interest.

Potted shrubs offer great versatility because they can be moved easily. Perhaps you would like to bring your fragrant butterfly bush onto the patio for a summer party or move the hebe closer to the house for winter protection? No problem—especially if you use lightweight containers.

A stunning specimen in a container can serve as a focal point in the garden, or use two to frame an entrance. Got a bare spot in the border? Drop in a planted container and you'll fill the space with style, quickly adding color, height, and texture. That's also a great way to test drive a plant in a new location without actually planting it and then having to dig it up again—much kinder on your back and on the roots!

Many gardeners struggle with poor soil that makes growing anything in the ground a real challenge. Problem solved if your garden shrubs are in premium potting soil.

Growing shrubs in containers is also a great way to save money. By purchasing a young plant and growing it for several years in a container, it will be a valuable, mature specimen by the time you wish to transplant it to a larger pot or the landscape. You also will save money and time over the typical twice-yearly container planting necessary when relying on annuals.



- Lo & Behold 'Blue Chip Jr.' butterfly bush (*Buddleia* 'Blue Chip Jr.')
- Lil Miss Sunshine bluebeard

(Caryopteris × clandonensis 'Janice')

Perfect partners for a sunny spot, this duo offers fragrance from spring until fall. The felted foliage of the dwarf, sterile butterfly bush is a silvery-green—a perfect foil for the scented purple flowers that bloom for many months. In contrast, it is the golden leaves of the bluebeard that emit an herbal smell when crushed, although it also is covered with sky-blue flowers in late summer. As a bonus, both shrubs are deer-resistant.



Hardiness: Zones 5-9 Light: Full sun Water: Average



Hardiness: Zones 5–9 Light: Full sun Water: Average to dry Mature size: 3 feet tall and wide



Finally, shrubs require much less maintenance than traditional mixed containers. With minimal deadheading they are fuss-free, leaving you time to sit back and enjoy your garden.

Interesting foliage is the key to great garden design, and the same applies to containers. Even if you want a flowering shrub, look for one that will look equally as beautiful when it isn't in bloom by virtue of its attractive leaves (or bark).

Far from limiting the possibilities, relying on foliage expands the design palette. For example, perhaps you love hibiscus and would like to grow one in a

pot. The one shown here has a beautiful variegated leaf in soft green and creamy white—I would be happy looking at this even if it never bloomed. With just this one shrub, you have it all.

Dwarf, slow-growing specimens are ideal for containers, but don't limit yourself to those. With excellent drainage, quality potting soil, fertilizer, and a large enough pot, you can grow just about any shrub or small tree.

There is definitely something that will work for every taste and every situation, whether you struggle with deer or shade or want year-round interest.



Shrubs for the sun

- Double Play Blue Kazoo spirea (Spiraea media 'SMSMBK')
- Sugar Tip rose of Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus* 'America Irene Scott')

The spirea is truly a fivestar shrub for the soft-blue foliage alone, especially with the burgundy flush on the new growth and intense red color in fall. Clusters of fuzzy white flowers in spring attract bees and butterflies, but deer mercifully leave it alone. A perfect companion plant.

A romantic concoction of pink and white, the ruffled pink flowers of this rose of Sharon are reminiscent of a party dress. Set against the soft-green and creamy-white variegated leaves, the effect is magical. Even the buds are attractive as the hundreds of tiny white hairs give the effect of being dipped in sugar. This can be trained as a small tree or kept smaller by pruning.



Hardiness: Zones 4–9 Light: Full sun or partial shade Water: Average to moist Mature size: 3 feet tall and wide



Hardiness: Zones 5–8 Light: Full sun Water: Average Mature size: 8–12 feet tall and 4–6 feet wide





A trio for fall color Brandywine viburnum (Viburnum nudum 'Bulk')

- Blues Festival St. John's wort (Hypericum kalmianum 'SMHKBF')
- Pinky Winky hydrangea (*Hydrangea paniculata* 'DVPpinky')

Cluster these together and you have it all—flowers, berries, and a blaze of color in fall. The viburnum provides glossy green leaves that belie the intense red fall color to come. It also boasts white spring flowers that are followed by multicolor berries. Matching it for size but exceeding in flower power is Pinky Winky hydrangea. Stout red stems echo the pink tones that flush the white blooms in fall. In contrast, Blues Festival St. John's wort is much daintier, with soft blue-tone foliage that becomes almost hidden by fuzzy yellow flowers in summer and fall.





Hardiness: Zones 5-9 Light: Full sun or partial shade Water: Average Mature size: 5-6 feet tall and wide



Hardiness: Zones 4-9 Light: Full sun Water: Average to moist Mature size: 2-3 feet tall and wide

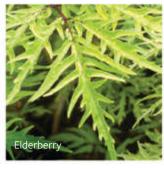


Hardiness: Zones 3-8 **Light:** Full sun or partial sun Water: Average Mature size: 6-8 feet tall and wide



Deer-resistant

- Lemony Lace elderberry (Sambucus racemosa 'SMNSRD4')
- Sunjoy Tangelo barberry (Berberis thunbergii 'O'Byrne')



Tiers of feathery golden foliage are studded with clusters of white flowers in spring followed by red fall berries. Because new growth also has a burgundy hue, this large shrub packs a serious color punch for three seasons.

Hardiness: Zones 3–7 Light: Full sun to partial shade Water: Average to moist Mature size: 3–5 feet tall and wide



The foliage of this striking new barberry opens a vibrant orange before maturing to a rich, deep red in summer and fiery shades in fall. Many leaves also have a distinct chartreuse margin, adding to the drama.

Hardiness: Zones 4-9 Light: Full sun Water: Average to dry Mature size: 3-4 feet tall and wide

Designer Tips

Group containers

If you want to add a cluster of containers to your patio, consider these tips for maximum impact:

- Include containers and/or plants in various heights.
- Vary the plant shape, foliage color, and texture of the individual plants just as you would in the landscape.
- Select simple containers to keep the focus on the shrubs.

Select containers

- Make sure the mouth (opening) of the container is the widest part for easy removal of the shrub later.
- The containers shown here are made from resin and have extra-thick walls, making them ideal for cold-winter areas. Their light weight is also a plus for ease of moving or where weight restrictions might be a consideration.
- Frost-resistant, high-fired ceramic is also a good material choice for those areas of the country with less-severe winters
- Be sure your container has three or four drainage holes; I recommend $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter.

Ongoing Care of Container Gardens

Watering

Water your containers regularly. A drip-irrigation system is ideal. If watering by hand be sure to water at soil level; do not sprinkle the plants. In small pots if the soil feels dry to the touch 1 inch down, it's time to water. In larger pots, water when the top 2 inches are dry. Water slowly until it comes through the drainage holes at the base of the pot.

Fertilizer

- In May add a half inch of compost and sprinkle a slow release fertilizer, such as Osmocote, onto the soil surface, then water with Moo Poo tea every two weeks as an extra hoost
- In October add a half inch of compost over the soil surface but do not fertilize.

General care

Remove dead flowers and leaves from the soil surface regularly to reduce the chance of the plant fungus botrytis.

Transplanting

When the roots fill the pot and you notice the shrub does not seem quite so vigorous, it's time to either transplant it into a larger container or into the garden. The method is exactly the same as it was for planting it originally.

Winter care in cold climates

In extreme cold you might need to move the container either into a brightly lit garage or at least into a protected location against a wall. Do not water your container if freezing temperatures are imminent.

Plant a Proper Pot Like a Pro

There is a right way to plant a shrub in a container. Here's how a plant expert does it.



MATERIALS:

- Madison container by Crescent Garden
- Ecoscraps potting soil
- Osmocote (for summer planting)
- Shrub
- Hand fork, soil scoop, and watering can
- Moo Poo tea



Step 1: Make sure the drainage hole is clear. Do not add any fillers or rocks to the base of the pot before adding potting soil.



Step 2: Sprinkle in Osmocote as directed and mix lightly into the soil.



Step 3: Tease roots gently using a hand fork. This method works for even tough shrub roots and is much less traumatic than cutting the roots with a knife.



Step 4: Place the shrub in the pot so the lowest point that you want to be visible above the soil sits approximately 1 inch below the rim, then fill in around the sides with additional soil. Water well using Moo Poo tea.

Shrubs for Small Spaces Tiny Wine ninebark

- (Physocarpus opulifolius 'SMPOTW')
- Anna's Magic Ball arborvitae (Thuja occidentalis 'Anna Van Vloten')

These shrubs might be small in size but they are big on personality, especially when placed together. This new dwarf ninebark is compact, bushy, and mildew-resistant, and the bronze foliage sets off the constellation of delicate flowers in spring beautifully. The sculpted chartreuse foliage of the spherical conifer is a standout year-round.



Light: Full sun Water: Average

Mature size: 3-4 feet tall and wide



Hardiness: Zones 3-7 Light: Full sun or partial shade

Water: Average

Mature size: 1½ feet tall and wide

For more information, see Resources on page 110.

Written and produced by Marty Ross Photography by Rob Cardillo Fime-Tested Garden Pamela Harper's sparkling four-season garden in Virginia inspired her writing, and after more than 40 years, it remains a beautiful work in progress. Camellia japonica hybrid



ABOVE: In a glorious moment in spring, a graceful Yunnan redbud (*Cercis glabra*) and snow-white *Wisteria sinensis* 'Alba' bloom together in Pamela Harper's mature and fascinating garden. **RIGHT:** Pamela inspects the white wisteria. **OPPOSITE:** Camellia japonica hybrid.

THE CLOSEST THING PAMELA HARPER HAS to a garden plan is a vast collection of typed or handwritten and heavily annotated index cards cataloging every plant she has ever purchased, what she paid for each plant, and where she planted it. Beyond that, "nothing ever went down on paper," she says.

For more than 40 years, Pam's richly planted, 2-acre garden in Seaford, Virginia, has been her workshop, photography studio, and experiment station. Plan or no, her garden and her keen observations and refreshing advice and opinions about plants, design, and planting combinations are all thoroughly documented in her five gardening books, especially in her classic *Time-Tested Plants: Thirty Years in a Four-Season Garden*.

"I'm not really sure myself how the design developed," Pam says. There was no driveway when she and her late husband, Patrick, bought their property, and the first order of business was to put in a gravel drive, which immediately seemed to define the spaces around it. Pam then set about filling it in with trees, shrubs, and perennials.





ABOVE: This scene looks toward the street in front of Pam's house, but magnificent trees provide ample privacy. In the foreground, sweet olive (Osmanthus × burkwoodii) blooms behind the garden bench. The showy two-tone trunks of a tall Japanese crape myrtle (Lagerstroemia fauriei) rise just behind and to the right of the bench, and a glorious Kousa dogwood (Cornus kousa) in full bloom fills the background.



Pam's goal was ambitious. "I want to grow every plant that ever was," she says. She is now in her 80s and still working on it.

Although she is an insatiable plant collector, Pam's sharp photographer's eye for composition helped her develop a garden of carefully structured and layered scenes and dazzling details. Azaleas flourish under tall trees in the beautiful Tidewater Virginia climate, but her garden has "probably only six or seven kinds, each one in fairly large quantities," she says. "It stops it from looking like a collection." Almost all of the beds in her garden can be seen from two sides. Treasures are tucked in everywhere: in the frilly skirts of shrubs, along the neat edges of paths, next to a garden bench. She moves plants around so often that some remain in large plastic pots, which are sunk into the soil in her garden while she considers whether the spot is just right. She may give herself several years to make these decisions, eventually moving a plant just a little farther back, or to one side, or out of her garden altogether.





ABOVE: Paths wind through the garden, revealing new views around every turn. In the soft light of early April, trees and shrubs are blooming and just leafing out. The spiked leaves of yucca (*Yucca recurvifolia* 'Margaritaville') add drama on one side of this path, and a lofty flourish of pink flowers on a native redbud hybrid (*Cercis canadensis* 'Tennessee Pink') draws visitors on around the corner.

"If something does not do well, for whatever reason, I stop growing it," she says. "There are plenty of plants waiting to go into the gaps."

When her career as an author, photographer, and speaker kept her a little too busy to maintain order in the garden, Pam sought the help of a gardening partner and was introduced to Don McKelvey, a gardener and arborist at Colonial Williamsburg, which is just up the road from Seaford. McKelvey, who retired from Colonial Williamsburg a year ago, has been working with Pam about once a week for the past 20 years. They have become collaborators, fine-tuning planting schemes and discussing pruning jobs. Over the years, there have been drastic overhauls and rescue operations, principally after storms. Recently, Pam lost her snowdrop collection in the process of having a tree removed. "I wept and wailed for a while," she says, "and then I thought, 'OK, I really wanted *Hydrangea paniculata* Vanilla Strawberry,' and now all I have to do is find it."

New plants give Pam a thrill and her garden a spark. Plants passed along from friends are her treasures. "As the years go by, my garden becomes increasingly a garden of remembrance," she says. *Iris japonica* and hellebores in her garden came from the plantswoman and author Elizabeth Lawrence, who wrote extensively of her own intensively planted gardens in Raleigh and Charlotte, North Carolina.

Pam admits that she sometimes walks around her garden with a plant in a pot, wondering just where it will be at its best. There is much to be learned. Her eyesight is failing, so she does not photograph her garden anymore, but, she says, "I am out here every day, and I don't think I have ever visited a garden, anywhere, without learning something."

Last year, she planted a spectacular new crape myrtle in her courtyard, scoured local garden shops for a particular Oriental poppy, and, at the end of October, when many gardeners were thinking of tucking in a few spring-flowering bulbs and calling it a season, she came home with six new deciduous azaleas. "I'm trying to decide where best to put them and whether something else has to come out," she says. "Ever onward."

For more information, see Resources on page 110.



Written by Risa Quade Produced by Nick Crow Photography by Brie Williams



The Do-It-Yourself When fondness for nature combines with a roll-up-your-sleeves attitude, a garden becomes a backyard haven for flora, fauna, and folks.







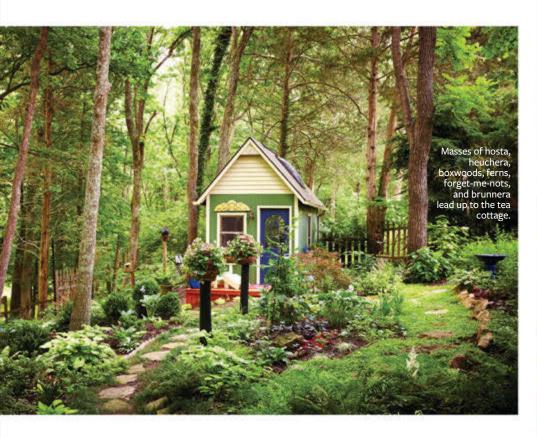
ABOVE RIGHT: During the growing season, Carolyne Breeden spends five to six hours a day in her garden. "Our gardens have become a lifetime membership to the 'Y' for the exercise they provide us," she says. ABOVE: A weathered picket fence, fringed in gayfeather (Liatris spicata) and draped with clematis, borders the 1-acre flower garden.

WHAT IF, INSTEAD OF battling the natural world, we invite it into our yards? That's exactly what Carolyne and Robert Breeden have done with their woodland garden they call Wisteria Cottage Garden in Louisville, Kentucky. Purple wisteria panicles drip from the garage, drifts of bright blue forget-me-nots line the paths, and cascades of roses encase the front entrance arbor. Carolyne says the best part of her garden is "going out early each morning to see what new flowers have bloomed and listening to the birds and watching the butterflies flutter and the bees fly from flower to flower."

This lush profusion results from ample research and plenty of hard work. "I give my husband, Robert, pictures out of magazines or books, and he then turns the pictures into realities," Carolyne says. Along with planting loads of perennials, the couple has constructed all the benches, arbors, circle patios, chicken coop, koi pond, compost bin, rock walls, an outdoor shower, and all the brick and stone pathways on their property. "We enjoy working on these garden projects together," she adds. "Robert enjoys the challenge of turning a picture into reality, and what better way for us to share our interests than in the gardens?"

Their partnership has shaped this woodland for almost a quarter of a century. They left 2 acres of their land natural for the surrounding wildlife; the rest has been planted with some 3,250 plants (including





150 different perennials), which took them two weeks just to tally. Creating a cottage garden from heavily wooded and sloped land tested their determination. "I have had a real challenge amending the soil and dealing with the amount of shade in my woodland garden," she says. "There was a lot of clay and rocks in the soil and I had to limb up the trees to provide muchneeded light." Coaxing compost into the clay has improved its texture, and carving a dry creek bed now handles some of the rainwater runoff on the back slope.

The result of their efforts is an idyllic gardenscape friendly to wildlife. Deer, turkeys, chickens, pheasants, and ornamental koi have set up residence in the Breeden garden, as well birds drawn to the 28 birdhouses, five birdbaths, plants, and many feeders that decorate the property. While an appreciation of nature shaped

their horticultural efforts, it also added a few challenges. "We had a real problem early on with the deer. I can tell you for sure, deer love hostas," Carolyne says. Of all their attempts to keep grazers from their garden plants, woven deer fencing has proven successful for the past two years.

"We can honestly say that our lives are better and we are healthier because of our gardens," Carolyne says. "We can also confirm that from the quantity of wildlife we have attracted—the animals, birds, bees, and butterflies—also enjoy sharing our gardens." Relaxing on their deck and looking out into their surroundings teeming with life, both Robert and Carolyne can attest to the excellent reasons for their years of hard work and encouraging nature into the garden.

For more information, see Resources on page 110.

1. The inside of the well-appointed tea cottage features Carolyne's pink ruffle dishes, used to celebrate her daughters' birthdays when they were little. "They still talk about their birthdays and tea parties using the pink ruffle dishes," she says. 2. Surrounded by creeping Jenny, honeysuckle, acuba, and black-eyed Susan vine and dotted with lotus, the 1,000-gallon koi pond contains koi more than 21 inches long that were born in the pond. 3. Robert constructed a three-bin compost system for turning chicken litter, sediment from the koi fish pond, table scraps, garden cuttings, and horse manure from a neighbor into rich compost. 4. The screened-in chicken coop houses bantam chickens, Sebrights, Cochins, quail hens, Silkies, Mille Fleurs, and red golden and yellow golden Chinese pheasant. 5. Providing food, water, and shelter to a variety of species, the Breedens' property has been designated a National Wildlife Habitat since 2002. 6. The Mille Feur chicken ranks among Carolyne's favorites. "They are one of the nicest chickens we have," she says.













Make the Most of Shade

Every garden has some shade. Some gardens are mostly shaded. A major benefit of the extra space that sometimes comes with a country garden is the ability to allow shady areas to capture some of the atmospheric tranquility of native woods and to encourage a more naturalistic approach to planting. Here are some tried-and-and-true shade-lovers to brighten up less-than-light spots.







Japanese painted fern (Athyrium niponicum)



Brunnera 'Jack Frost'



Heuchera 'Georgia Peach'



Hosta 'Sagae'



Hosta 'Sun Power'



Hosta 'Patriot'



Pulmonaria 'Silver Bouquet'

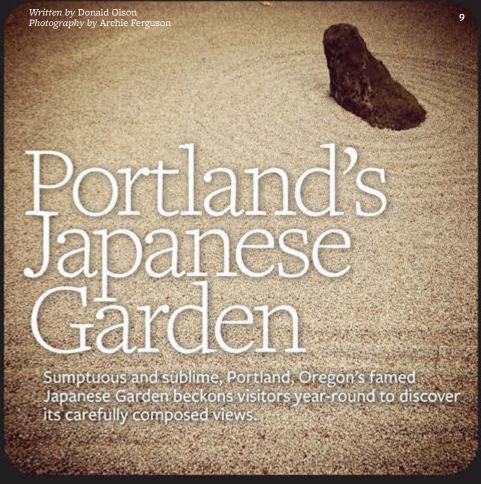


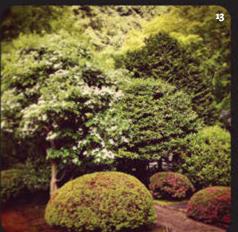
Brunnera 'King's Ransom'













THE PORTLAND JAPANESE

GARDEN is one of those rare gardens that can be visited and enjoyed in all seasons and all weathers. Spring through early summer is the best time to catch the garden's many floral highlights, but a trove of impeccably maintained conifers, evergreen shrubs, rocks, stonework, and architectural and water features ensures a satisfying visit at any time of the year.

The garden, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2013, occupies a 5½-acre site carved out of a steep forested hillside in Washington Park, close to downtown Portland, Oregon. Towering Douglas firs and Western red cedars surround it and add a sense of natural enclosure. I always take the fern-fringed forest trail up to the garden's entrance because it adds a nice sense of anticipation and reward to my visit.

Considered the most authentic Japanese-style garden outside of Japan, the Portland Japanese Garden is actually five different gardens, each representative of a traditional Japanese garden style. I nearly always take the same route through the gardens, savoring the carefully orchestrated views that unfurl along my way like scenes on a scroll of Japanese landscape painting.

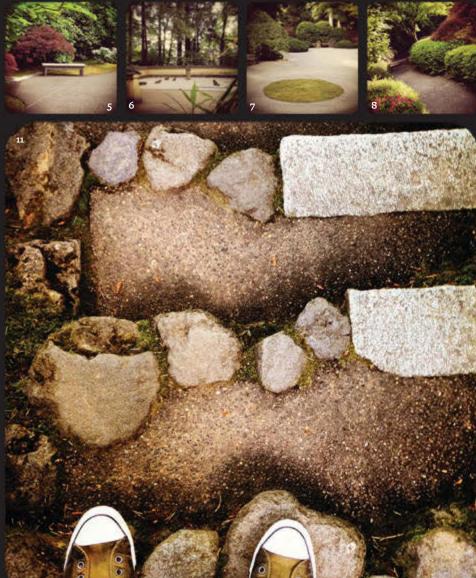
The plants and plantings in this garden are remarkable and at times breathtaking. In May, I always stop to admire the Japanese wisteria (*Wisteria floribunda*), its purple racemes dangling











1. Komainu, or lion-dogs, guard the entrance gate. 2. Korean dogwood (Cornus kousa) flowers greet visitors in June. 3. A Moon Gate frames the entrance to Natural Garden. 4. Weeping Higan cherry (*Prunus subhirtella* 'Pendula') and yew shade a pebble beach. 5. A mahogany bench sits beside a Japanese maple. 6. The unusual Sand and Stone Garden is composed of rocks and raked gravel. 7. Camellias form a backdrop for the raked gravel patterns in the Flat Garden. 8. Sculpted azaleas and Japanese laceleaf maple line

the Pavilion pathway. 9. Precise patterns are raked into the gravel of the Sand and Stone Garden. 10. The fivetiered pagoda lantern was a gift from Portland's sister city, Sapporo, Japan. 11. Irregular Garden draw attention to the garden beneath one's feet. 12. Enkianthus (foreground) and path. 13. When the azaleas are finished blooming, Korean dogwood begins its show. 14. Rhododendron 'Mount Everest' blooms near the entrance gate.

15. The Kasuga-style stone lantern is one of many styles in the garden. 16. Bronze cranes, symbols of longevity, stand amid Sasa bamboo in the Upper Pond 17. Heavenly Falls in the Lower Pond is surrounded by rhododendrons and Japanese maples.

18. A natural stone basin surrounded by soft-pink blooming azaleas epitomizes the yin and yang of hard and soft found throughout the Japanese Garden. 19. Ferns and a Mugo pine soften the landscape below the Moon Bridge.















like jewels from a rustic trellis. Rising beside it is a magnificent antique stone lantern in the shape of a five-tiered pagoda, one of the many decorative stone lanterns of different shapes, sizes, and ages used as focal points in the garden landscapes. Throughout, perfectly sited and exquisitely finished bridges, gates, and small, open-sided shelters frame views and offer areas of repose and reflection.

From the Wisteria Arbor I make my way to the Strolling Pond Garden, a tranquil spot that turns into a flamboyant showstopper from April through June. That's when perfectly shaped mounds of pink and white azaleas (*Rhododendron gumpo* and *R*. 'Mount Everest') are reflected in the mirrorlike surface of the Upper Pond.

A magnificent laceleaf maple (*Acer palmatum*) near the pond is reputedly one of the most photographed trees in the United States. Though laceleaf maples are not used in traditional gardens in Japan, there are several of them in this garden. In general, you

won't find many cultivars because the goal is to adhere as closely as possible to the classic plant palette used in Japanese gardens in the Hein period (794–1185 A.D.).

The Tea House, a small, perfectly proportioned building with a tile roof and sliding shoji screens, was created in the 1960s by a master craftsman in Japan and reassembled in the Tea Garden. It's used for demonstrations of the elaborate Japanese tea ceremony, but there's a ceremonial aspect to all the gardens. Shinto, Buddhist, and Taoist beliefs underlie the shape, placement, and interaction of plants, stone, and water—the three elements found in all traditional Japanese gardens.

On my way to the Natural Garden I always stop at the aptly named Zig-Zag Bridge to admire the profusion of Juneblooming Japanese iris (*Iris ensata*) and the huge, brilliantly colored koi that slowly weave through the Lower Pond. Beyond Moon Gate, a series of stairs and winding pathways leads

me down into the Natural Garden, a forested hillside garden with racing, rippling streams; quiet ponds; and an understory of mature deciduous trees and shrubs. The ever-changing patterns of the stone stairs and pathways draw my eye downward, creating a mindfulness that slows my pace and invites appreciation of the world at my feet.

The Zen-inspired Sand and Stone Garden at the bottom of the Natural Garden is a "dry" garden created with upright rocks and raked gravel that suggest islands in a sea. Like all the other gardens, it creates a unique mood and invites contemplation (and speculation: How do they rake without leaving a footprint?).

From here I climb back up the hillside to the Flat Garden, meant to be viewed from the veranda of a long, low, wood-and-glass pavilion. This garden masterpiece features a large "lake" of raked white gravel that intensifies the aesthetic effect of the carefully pruned trees and shrubs









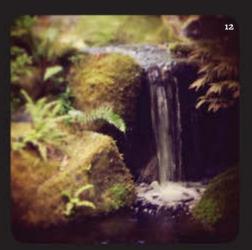


around its shoreline. It's unforgettable in May, when a weeping Higan cherry (*Prunus subhirtella* 'Pendula') spreads a skirt of delicate white flowers and a bevy of Yoshino cherry trees (*Prunus* × *yedoensis yoshino*) adds frothy clouds of pink blossom in the background.

I have to get in one last visual treat before leaving. It's that expansive view of Portland and iconic Mount Hood seen from the terrace in front of the pavilion. It's a perfect place to say sayonara, I'll be back soon.









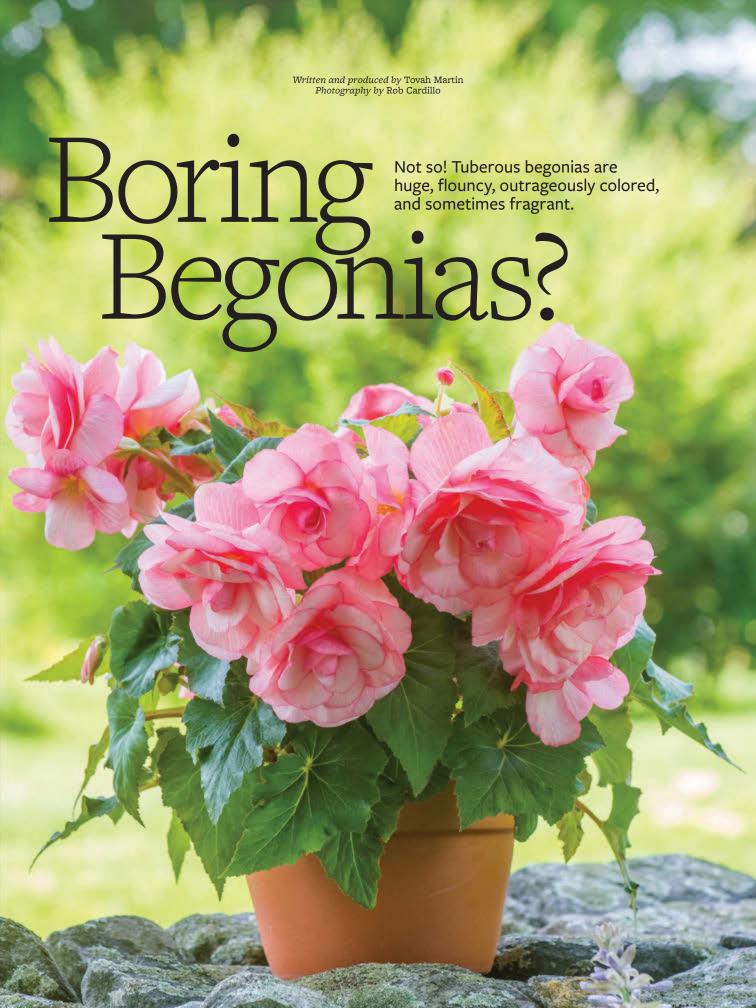


1. Water drips from a bamboo flume into a square granite basin in the Natural Garden. 2. A bench made of native Douglas fir beckons from a corner in the Natural Garden. 3. This venerable Japanese maple is one of the most photographed trees in the U.S. 4. Moss adorns a "spirit house" lantern. 5. Hosta and sweet flag provide interest all season long. 6. A stone pathway crosses the Middle Tea Garden. 7. Fencing crosses beneath a Japanese maple. 8. Pavement salvaged from the Portland Civic Auditorium is used throughout the garden. 9. The Peace Lantern, a

gift from the mayor of Yokohama, Japan, arrived on the first Japanese commercial ship to enter Portland. 10. The Moon Bridge is flanked with false cypress (*Chamaecyparis*). 11. A single *Stewartia* blossom decorates a gravel path. 12. A waterfall tumbles gently into the Strolling Pond Garden. 13. Iris, ferns, and Japanese maples surround the Lower Pond. 14. Stone steps climb the leafy hillside in the Natural Garden. 15. Natural stone basin is covered in moss. 16. Note the mix of natural materials. 17. Every Japanese maple in the garden is meticulously groomed.

VISIT PORTLAND'S JAPANESE GARDEN The garden is at 611 S.W. Kingston Ave. in Washington Park, Portland, OR 97205; 503/223-1321; *japanesegarden.com*. Open daily year-round (except Thanksgiving and Christmas Day); April–September Monday noon–7 p.m., Tuesday–Sunday 10 a.m.–7 p.m.; October–March Monday noon–4 p.m., Tuesday–Sunday 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Admission: \$9.50 adults, \$7.75 seniors, \$6.75 children 6–17.

Public transportation: From downtown Portland, take MAX light rail to the Oregon Zoo stop; from there, walk or take the Tri-Met shuttle bus #63 (weekdays only) to the garden. A shuttle bus is available to take visitors up to the garden entrance, or you can follow the forested path from the parking lot. Steep stairs make the Natural Garden unsuitable for wheelchairs or those with mobility issues; all other gardens are fully accessible.









WHETHER CROWDS COME TO White Flower Farm in Litchfield, Connecticut, to see the perennial borders or the tuberous begonias is a toss-up, because late spring and summer are prime time for both. The token tuberous staged out front of the shop are just a tease; the real stash is cosseted in a little greenhouse, where they are carefully tended by head gardener Cheryl Whalen. Slip through its doors, and a brazen scene of unabashed color hits you from all angles. High on every serious gardener's bucket list should be a pilgrimage to that greenhouse, because of its massive trove of the treasured Blackmore & Langdon hybrids. But don't stop there. Take some tuberous begonias home, and summer will never be the same.

If you hear "begonias" and think of brightly colored leaves but not-so-thrilling flowers, then you're not thinking of a tuberous type. While foliage is usually a begonia's claim to fame, the leaves of tuberous begonias are not their primary virtue. Dark green, slightly serrated, and certainly not bad-looking, the foliage is OK. But it's generally hidden behind immense flowers dripping from the plant. We're talking ruffled, manypetal blossoms that can easily measure 5 inches of frilly flashiness. Composed of many furling petals, some mimic massive roses—the sparkling white 'Lancelot' and crepe-paperlike petals of peach-color 'Tahiti' are sterling examples. But there are also more open-faced versions with their numerous petals stacked tightly, like a sophisticated spin on zinnias. They come in painterly shades that are reminiscent of van Gogh, including blood red, deep cherry, screaming orange, sunset peach, canary yellow, lipstick pink, and goose-down white. A few of those zinnia-onsteroids types such as 'Party Dress' and 'Mardi Gras' also have bicolor petals edged in a different shade. And we're not just talking a sole flower here and there throughout the season. These workhorses pump out umbels of many flowers all clustered together from early summer until frost. Fragrance also can be a factor, with the

ABOVE LEFT: With butter-yellow blossoms as big as Whalen's face, the flowers of 'Corona' are flouncy and long-lasting—each bloom remains prime for two weeks or more.















citrusy-spicy perfume of 'John Smith' and 'Yellow Sweetie'.

When David Smith arranged to import the first Blackmore & Langdon tuberous begonias to White Flower Farm in 1955, only a few months after the nursery lured him away from his native Britain, he knew exactly what he was starting. Not only was he putting the nursery on the map, but the color quotient was also suddenly ramped up a few notches. "They'd never seen anything like it in the States," says Smith, who was director of horticulture at White Flower Farm until 1990. Tuberous begonias caught on quickly, and the collection has now expanded to more than 70 varieties. The vast majority are Blackmore & Langdon hybrids, joined by a smattering of unique California-created AmeriHybrid varieties.

The tuberous begonias are now under the tender loving care of Whalen (who is best friends with the now-retired Smith). When White Flower Farm first asked Whalen to switch from her greenhouse manager duties to take on the head gardener position in 1998, she jumped at the offer—with one stipulation: She asked to be allowed to continue curating the tuberous begonia collection. Every year, she celebrates Valentine's Day by taking the tuberous begonias out of storage, where they've been slumbering in a 50°F root cellar. She pots them 1/2 inch below the soil surface in a pot just large enough to accommodate the bulb, waters them in, and waits. "A month later, a little earthquake erupts and the growth appears," she says. By April 1, the bulbs graduate to 10-inch azalea-type (shallow) clay pots or White Flower Farm's signature 10-inch cedar hanging baskets—just one tuber per container. Because the weather can be unpredictable in the area, Whalen protects her precious tuberous from wind and thunderstorms in the greenhouse.

From the time the first blossom unfurls around June 1 ("The first flowers are the biggest and best," she says), the greenhouse is never without blossoms. Each flower can tarry 2–3 weeks in perfection, with umbels continually











producing buds on a plant that eventually smothers its container in color. Meanwhile, Whalen supports the upright varieties with an inconspicuously placed bamboo stake, tying the stem with biodegradable twine. Cascading types are occasionally pinched to make them branch. Other than an application of ½ teaspoon of Osmocote when she's initially potting the tubers, Whalen doesn't fertilize except for a half-strength application of blossom booster or fish emulsion in July to keep those oversize bloom machines chugging along.

Whalen's favorite is the primrose yellow 'Corona' with its massive blossoms. But she's partial to them all. And one of the perks of her profession is eavesdropping on customers emerging from the tuberous begonia house. "I'm so lucky. People return summer after summer, but it's always like they've never seen a tuberous begonia before. I love to hear their reactions," she says. And who can blame them? The full impact of those majestic, sophisticated, and larger-than-life begonias is surreal. And for Whalen, she says there is a special bond with the tuberous begonias she's been nurturing: "They're my kids."

Plant at a Glance **Tuberous Begonias**

Conditions: Tuberous begonias do not require a greenhouse but do best where they are protected from wind and heavy rain and can bask in the diffused light of an eastern or western exposure. "Some sun is important," says head gardener Cheryl Whalen. "In too much shade, they don't bloom as well."

Hardiness: Tuberous begonias are very tender annuals and will not tolerate frost. Zones 9–10.

Planting: They grow best in containers—Whalen uses 10-inch clay pots for the upright varieties and 10-inch cedar hanging baskets for the cascading versions.

Soil: Tuberous begonias thrive in peat-based, well-drained potting soil.

Watering: Generally these plants need water once every other day, but check them daily. Avoid overwatering. Fertilizing: Begonias aren't hungry plants. Whalen includes ½ teaspoon of Osmocote when planting and then applies a half-strength diluted blossom booster or fish emulsion in July.

Flowers: Tuberous begonias bloom only in summer. Blossoms start appearing in June with a range that includes white, yellow, pink, orange, and red. Flowers can be 5 inches across. Cascading varieties usually have slightly smaller blossoms.

Height: Upright varieties reach 2–3 feet in height. Cascading types dangle down 1–2 feet.

Problems: Powdery mildew can be an issue when nights are cool and days are warm and muggy. Brisk air circulation helps.





Storing Tuberous Begonias

Curating the tuberous begonia collection at White Flower Farm in Litchfield, Connecticut, is one of Cheryl Whalen's favorite responsibilities. From the moment she takes the bulbs out of storage on Valentine's Day to the bittersweet interlude when the bulbs slip into dormancy and need to be stored, she savors the process and has it down to a science. By putting the tuberous begonias to bed properly every year, she makes certain that the collection is kept intact and the 70 begonia varieties under her care are preserved. Here's how she does it:

- 1. In autumn, tuberous begonias usually begin to slip into dormancy by themselves. But if they are still perking along by frost, Whalen prods them into slumber by withholding water. The growth will die back, leaving the naked tubers below the soil. At that point, lift the tubers and remove any roots.
- 2. With a soft brush—Whalen's brush has seen a lot of tuberous-begonia cleaning action—she dusts off any adhering soil so the tuber is clean, and checks for any problems. Begonia tubers come in all shapes and sizes and can become as large as your hand, especially the heftier Blackmore & Langdon varieties.
- 3. Whalen cures the tubers in trays in a dry, warm, shady place for a week or more. She is careful to keep the label beside the variety (actually, she has two labels for each plant—one is hidden in the bottom of the pot in case the regular label goes missing). And when Whalen says that these tubers are like her kids, she isn't exaggerating much—she tenderly covers them with a tarp overnight to keep the tubers warm.
- **4.** Whalen snugly wraps each tuber individually in newspaper, covering the tuber completely. The label is tucked in beside the bulb.
- **5.** Putting the larger bulbs on the bottom, Whalen stacks her precious treasures in a plastic lily crate, leaving a little room between packets. They are stored for the winter in a dark, dry root cellar where the temperature remains around 50°F.
- **6.** On Valentine's Day, the crates are brought up and the tubers are unpacked. If some are showing signs of growth, that's fine. Whalen pots the tubers ½ inch below the surface of a pot just slightly larger than the tuber before placing them in a 10-inch pot on April 1. Two months later, the glory days begin.

For more information, see Resources on page 110.





















Your vacation by the beach was sublime.

From the prime people-watching possibilities to the soothing vistas, it proved the perfect escape from the city. You wish it could have lasted forever—and that's where Katy Maslow and Michelle Inciarrano come in, because they can downsize your driftwood memories and distill them into a verdant tabletop jar. At Twig, their shop in Brooklyn, outdoor memories are condensed and tucked within terrariums. If you want zany, they can do that. And if you have a dark side, they can stopper that in glass also.

TOP LEFT: Ever-expanding Twig has moved four times in the last five years, finally settling into a destination shop in the Gowanus neighborhood of Brooklyn. **TOP RIGHT:** Best friends Katy Maslow, *left*, and Michelle Inciarrano, *right*, prepare for a terrarium workshop. **ABOVE:** Twig specializes in mixing memories with considerable tongue-in-cheek, starting with your go-to scenes. "If I zone out," Inciarrano says, "a secluded beach is where I want to be."



Maslow and Inciarrano trace their terrarium pursuits to a cruet that was in Inciarrano's kitchen cabinet. Maslow held up the curvaceous piece of glass, wondering how it could be put into service from a crafts standpoint, when Inciarrano chimed in, "That's a terrarium." But actually, it all began with a friendship, dual-charged imaginations, and a whole lot of talent times two.

In their tweens, Maslow and Inciarrano were inseparable. "We were a couple of little rebels," Inciarrano says. For once, a bond forged while cutting school paid off. But years passed, distance separated the two pals, and they lost touch—until Maslow came back to New York City for college. Not long after she returned, a mutual friend was invited to the unsuspecting Inciarrano's birthday party, and she decided to bring the perfect gift: Maslow. The two picked up where they left off.

An affinity for anything do-it-yourself was one of many mutual interests, and that's where the cruet came in. Together, the two self-propelled artistic types hosted crafts nights in Brooklyn, and they were in the process of prepping for one when the auspicious cruet came to light. They immediately sensed that they were on to something big in a tiny way. So they did their research, starting with talking to Inciarrano's biology professor about feasibility. He assured the two entrepreneurs that plants could survive—and thrive—sealed in glass. Historically, there was plenty of precedent for a biosphere ecosystem. But what Maslow and Inciarrano had in mind was a far cry from the Victorian version of terrariums. They strove to create small worlds with a story line. They wanted to shrink their friends and fit them into the diorama—all in scaled-down dimensions.

ABOVE: Maslow and Inciarrano's shop was originally an art gallery, "with a white pole in the middle of the room." The pole had to go. With the help of some chicken wire, wood, and papier mâché, a tree grew in Brooklyn. It spreads its limbs above their workshop space and terrariums for sale.













What followed was half a year of experimenting. They searched for anything glass, from gumball machines to lightbulbs, chemistry flasks, carafes, test tubes, snifters, salt-and-pepper sets, Mason jars—you name it. They experimented with every type of moss, peperomia, begonia, air plant, nerve plant, and strawberry begonia they could lay hands on. After making gifts for all their friends and relatives, they still had 50 or more terrariums hanging around their city apartments. That's when they sought an outlet at the Brooklyn Flea market. The concept took off.

Who can blame Brooklynites for falling hard and fast? The infinitely detailed tiny scenes concocted by Twig aren't just your grandmother's combinations of cutesy miniature plants tucked into aquariums. What Twig does is distill life into a few square inches of space—with tiny somebody-shrank-the-tourist/hiker/beach bum/cowboy-type figures included. It's unlike anything you've ever seen, prompting the two to coauthor a book about their compositions, *Tiny World Terrariums* (Stewart, Tabori & Chang; 2012).

Not only is the look fresh, but the scene is also an invitation to exhale. Twig's signature style is to carpet the container with moss, because it opens up a clear playing field on the scene and its characters. But there's also another feature of moss that intrigues Twig: Moss is soft, seductive, and luscious—in an apartment-therapy sort of way. Keen on community, the Twig chicks (as they call themselves) are the interior version of green guerrillas—making an urban impact with each terrarium they create. "They are a retreat; an escape for urbanites," Inciarrano says. Meanwhile, plugging into their inner perfectionist pays off for compiling small worlds that last. "We have to do deep breathing before working on a scene. Each terrarium can take days to create," she says.

ABOVE LEFT and RIGHT: Twig enlisted moss and pilea to create their "Catch of the Day" scene in a brandy snifter. **OPPOSITE LEFT:** In this scene, backpackers find a hidden stream made of chipped beach glass. **OPPOSITE, TOP RIGHT:** In a rope-suspended teardrop, Bambi dwells in the forest forever. **OPPOSITE, BOTTOM RIGHT:** Using waterproof plastic figurines, outdoor chores are a walk in the (mini) park. "Every scene has a backstory," Inciarrano says.







Originally, the two ran Twig out of a Brooklyn carriage house. But the duo eventually wanted a base of operations where customers could come and commune. Three years ago, they found a shop. With every imaginable narrative from camping adventures to macabre crime scenes encased in sparkling vignettes, the space is dedicated to marketing Maslow and Inciarrano's mini-magic. Twig also hosts workshops surrounded by glassware of all shapes, dimensions, and domains for purchase. They provide all the baby's tears, strawberry begonias, peperomias, ferns, and mosses that you might need to pull together your own life story. And they have the twigs, lichen, sticks, and stones on hand to build the contained landscape of your dreams. Perhaps most important, they have a plethora of little people to personalize your glass world. Then there's Maslow and Inciarrano at your elbow to explain exactly how to prepare, plant, and accessorize your tiny world. It's like taking a hike with your two new best friends—and then sealing that day in glass.

ABOVE LEFT: To create display shelves in their shop that hold terrarium scenes, ingredients, and magnifiers to examine the scenarios, Twig placed polished wood slabs on crates while wall-hanging terrariums hold air plants. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Within a dangling, oversize, whimsical "lightbulb," Twig tucked air plants in sea urchins combined with seashells as a snippet souvenir from a tropical island. "The goal," Inciarrano says, "is to make people smile."

Twig Terrarium Step-by-Step

When Katy Maslow and Michelle Inciarrano host workshops for creating tiny terrariums, big concepts are condensed into small spaces. The plant ingredients and figurines are personal, but the procedure for creating the base and inserting the elements remains the same. With years of experience, they know exactly how to compose a terrarium that remains fresh long after you've closed the lid on the scene.



MATERIALS:

- Clear glass container with an opening large enough to insert plants
- Gloves
- Clean ½- to ¾-inch pebbles
- Bowl
- Dried sphagnum moss
- A dowel for tamping
- Moistened potting soil
- A wooden spoon
- Terrarium plants such as ferns, miniphilodendrons, and palm seedlings
- Oversize tweezers
- Lichen, stones, driftwood, shells, bits of nature
- Figurines (let your fantasy flow!)
- Turkey baster or small measuring cup





Step 1: Insert a 1- to 2-inch layer (depending on the size of the glassware) of pebbles into the base of the container.



Step 2: Fully moisten the sphagnum moss in a bowl and wring out the excess water. "It's important to only introduce a certain amount of moisture into the terrarium," Maslow says.



Step 3: Insert a thin layer of sphagnum moss into the container and tamp it down with a dowel.



Step 4: Spoon 1 inch of moistened soil into the container, tamping it down.



Step 5: Unpot one of your mini plants, and massage the roots to loosen them before inserting the plant into the container with a pair of tweezers. Carefully place it firmly into the soil and repeat with additional plants to create the greenery. Don't crowd the plants; leave some room between each one for them to grow.



Step 4: Add soil to fill in gaps and tamp it to fully firm the plants in place.



Step 5: With tweezers, insert what Maslow and Inciarrano call "the ambiance" using lichen, stones, twigs, and natural objects. Add "the talent" with figurines to create the scene of your dreams.



Step 5: Using a turkey baster or small measuring cup, add water to the terrarium and seal it with the stopper or lid.

The Shimmering Sirens of Spring

A carefully orchestrated understory turns this Illinois lot into a magical woodland garden.









TRADITIONALLY, A LUSH GREEN LAWN is the staple of most outdoor landscapes. However, from the moment James and Joanne Kouracos spotted the wooded lot on which they chose to build their home, they had other plans. "There was huge potential here, and we made a commitment to try to change this overgrown thicket to bring out the beauty that was hidden beneath," says James, a retired dentist. And so, together, they have transformed this 1½ acre surrounding their modern home in Wheaton, Illinois, into a charming woodland garden full of richness and complexity.

At first, their woodland garden was not a garden at all. It was a jungle full of buckthorn, thorny brambles, and aggressive vines. Starting with a small section out back, every year Joanne would slash the invasive buckthorn and rip out the destructive brambles and vines. Trees were pruned to create a much airier, lofty canopy. Clearings were made, paths laid out, and woodland plants added to mimic nature. Year by year the garden developed, capturing the personality and spirit of its owners in a way that a professionally planned garden never could.

The early plantings thrived, and many native plants and wildflowers started to reappear on their own. Impressive stands of Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), toad lily (*Trillium sessile*), spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*), Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*), and white trout lily (*Erythronium albidum*) have spread on their own. Unlike the audaciously bold intensity of daffodils, most of these spring ephemerals do not create huge pools of color; they exhibit none of the in-your-face boisterous excitement. However, if people take the time to observe them closely, "they can't help but be impressed by their captivating delicacy, exquisite detailing and bewitching charms," Joanne says.

Springtime is the high point of this garden, although summer and fall hold hidden enchantments of their own. Working together throughout the years, the couple was able to achieve a natural effect with their perfectly orchestrated extravaganza of spring ephemerals, flowering bulbs, and hardy perennials.

TOP LEFT: Beneath a high canopy that provides dappled shade in summer and open skies in winter and spring, a tide of color rises from the woodland floor as numerous ephemerals, perennials, and bulbs jostle for space in the sunshine. ABOVE LEFT: James and Joanne Kouracos on an early morning stroll. LEFT: Viewed from the back deck is the tantalizing perspective of the woodland garden. The unobtrusive small stream is a delight to see, as are birds and insects that frequent it.







Located throughout the property, strategically placed tree stumps and logs—looking like they might actually occur in some wooded glade in the wild—imbue a sense of age and naturalness. Out front, surrounded by a gaggle of ferns, daffodils, Mayapples, and bluebells, the felled trunk of a oncemajestic oak tree lives on in dignified elegance, providing a home for owls and woodpeckers and winter refuge for local wildlife.

Today, the grass-free front yard is an eclectic medley of sweeping beds filled with brimming drifts of daffodils, pulmonaria, Canadian ginger (Asarum canadense), Japanese spurge (Pachysandra terminalis), hellebores, Siberian bugloss (Brunnera macrophylla), lily of the valley (Convallaria majalis), and the usual gang of spring ephemerals. To achieve this naturalized look, the couple had to overcome a major obstacle—the city itself.

Wheaton has strict laws as to what constitutes acceptable residential landscaping. In order to receive a variance allowing them to rip out the front lawn, the couple had to sign an agreement saying that if any neighbors complained during the first five years, James would replace the area with conventional landscaping consisting of lawn and shrubs. Not surprisingly, no one complained; today, the College of DuPage uses their woodland as a much-anticipated field trip in one of their horticultural courses.

Heading back around the side of the house, the first glimpse of the small stream running across the back of the property can be seen. The stream is just a teaser, though, to what lies beyond. Narrow bridges crisscross the stream, blending perfectly with the woodland plants along its edges. Intersecting woodchip pathways have a pleasant springy feel.

Multicolor drifts of sapphire-blue *Mertensia* and showy golden Celandine poppies (*Stylophorum diphyllum*) run into each other with some mingling at the edges. Ostrich fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*) adds a sense of mystery so characteristic of the woodlands, and glossy-green umbrellas of Mayapple popping up in colonies throughout May make kids

ABOVE LEFT: The narrow wood-chip path meandering through the lushly planted shade garden out back positively sings with its creators' hard work. Successes are many, and the first of these is in spring when stands of Mayapple, spring beauty, Virginia bluebells, pulmonaria, and golden Celandine poppies emerge to make groundswell of color. LEFT: A gorgeous spring container doesn't have to be complicated. Here, some early spring charmers, multihue pansies planted in a hollowed-out tree stump, add color and enchantment to the woodland garden.



Woodland Garden Planting Tips

- Don't be afraid to move plants around if you are unhappy with them or get bored with them.
- Don't try to do it all in one year. Look at other gardens and then choose the things you like best to do first.
- Unless you have trees whose leaves mat and don't decay readily, leave them where they fall. Homeowner James Kouracos rakes and shreds oak leaves and redeposits them on the beds.
- Be vigilant in checking plants for pests, and deal with any that appear before they become a problem.
- Read as much as you can about plants, and be adventurous in choosing lesser-known species.
- Keep a list of all the plants you have purchased; this is useful for keeping track of the plants that thrive or die in your yard.
- Don't spread your gardening activities too thin. Tackle one area at a time.
- A garden never stands still; watch for plants showing signs of decline or domination.
- Don't be paranoid about weeds. It's probably impossible to eradicate them completely, but they can be reduced by steady pulling or digging.
- Find plant combinations that work, and if there is space, repeat them.

wonder if fairies are dancing gaily among the muted tapestry.

Next to a log, Japanese painted ferns (*Athyrium niponicum*) add a soothing wash of color. A few steps away, the bright blue flowers of the charming false forget-me-not (*Brunnera macrophylla*) tower over the intriguing clear-white blossoms of bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*). A fascinating plant, its curious name comes from the blood-red sap that oozes when the stems or roots are broken. In early spring, a thick 8-inch stem pushes out of the ground, revealing a single leaf tightly wrapped around a large white flower bud. Lasting only a few days, the leaf unfurls when the sun is out and wraps back around the blossom in a protective cocoon at night or on cloudy and rainy days.

However beguiling these blooms are, the little woodlanders thriving in the open beneath the leafless canopy really steal the show. There are so many spring ephemerals that the garden looks like a large treasure box full of dainty horticultural jewels. "You need surprises in the garden," Joanna says. As if to prove her point, the winding paths offer discoveries at every turn. This garden is luxuriant to the casual observer, totally enchanting for the insightful plant connoisseur.

On the deck, colorful containers full of bold-faced pansies, multicolor calibrachoa, and a tiny petunia on steroids are set about in an intimate, almost nonchalant way, like a comfortable lived-in room. With nothing fussy or contrived, there is a great harmony and unity of style throughout the place and from season to season.

Joanne and James believe that there certainly are many good reasons, other than the need to mow grass, for gradually transforming the conventional garden or lot to woodland. For one, it's an ecologically sound idea. For another, the diverse mix of plants tends to discourage pests that affect conventional gardens. With the right choice of plants, watering is held to a minimum and pesticides can be dispensed with altogether. And though James still finds a weed here or there that he pulls by hand, most of the common weeds could not compete in the shade of this well-managed woodland and have, for all practical purposes, disappeared.

Early Spring Woodlanders

All early spring woodland plants grow naturally in rich, moist forest floors but are perfectly suited to a woodland home garden. Dappled shade and humus-rich soil provide these with the perfect growing conditions.



Barrenwort or Bishop's hat (Epimedium × rubrum)
Zones 5-9
Height: 6-12 inches
Clump-forming perennial sports
racemes of red flowers above heartshape leaflets on wiry stems in early
spring. New leaves in spring emerge
with a reddish tint, mature to green,
and turn reddish in fall.



Dutchman's breeches (Dicentra cucullaria)
Zones 3-7
Height: 10-12 inches
A delightful spring wildflower,
Dutchman's breeches is an easily
recognized, graceful woodland
perennial and is one of the earliest
to bloom. Clusters of fragrant, waxy,
white pantaloon-shape flowers float
over masses of fernlike leaves.



Siberian bugloss (Brunnera macrophylla)
Zones 3-8
Height: 12 inches
Low-maintenance, deer-resistant plant
is a slow-spreading perennial with
heart-shape, slightly puckered leaves
and sprays of delicate, azure-blue small
flowers. 'Looking Glass' and 'Sea Heart'
are notable with striking silvery foliage.

False forget-me-not or



Ostrich fern (Matteuccia struthiopteris)
Zones 3-8
Height: to 3 feet
Renowned for the fiddleheads that
emerge in spring, this deer-resistant,
clump-forming fern spreads freely
by underground runners. The female
fronds turn brown but remain rigidly
upright through the entire winter. 'The
King' flourishes in the South.



Rodgersia (Rodgersia aesculifolia)
Zones 4-8
Height: 3-6 feet
Bold clump-forming perennial typically
grown for its large, crinkled, coarsely
toothed, greenish-bronze leaves.
Flowers are fragrant, creamy-white
(sometimes pink) astilbelike panicles
blooming from June to August. Best
paired with finely textured plants.



Bent white trillium (*Trillium flexipes*) Zones: 4-7

Height: 18 inches
Easily mistaken for *Trillium*grandiflorum, outward-facing, creamywhite flowers are held above a terminal
whorl of green leaves.



Bishop's hat (*Epimedium* × *versicolor* 'Sulphureum')

Zones 5–9
Height: 6–12 inches
'Sulphureum' features short-spur
yellow flowers which appear in
attractive racemes floating on wiry
stems above spiny-tooth, heart-shape
leaflets.



Bleeding heart (Dicentra 'Luxuriant')

Zones: 3–9
Height: 12–18 inches
Bleeding heart cultivar with deeply
cut, fernlike, grayish-green foliage
and cherry-red, nodding, heart-shape
flowers persists throughout the
season. In cooler climates, flowering
may continue throughout the summer
but generally stops in hot weather.



Celandine poppy (Stylophorum diphyllum)

Zones 5–8
Height: 18 inches
Handsome perennial with bluish-green,
scallop leaves and clusters of bright
yellow, poppylike flowers resembling
buttercups, which are followed by
attractive, nodding green hairy pods.



Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*)

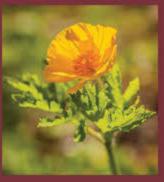
Zones 4-9
Height: 1-3 feet
Best known for its spring display of
hooded, green spathes (Jack's pulpit),
typically striped with purple. In fall, the
plant bears clusters of densely packed,
showy red berries.



Japanese spurge (Pachysandra terminalis)

Zones 5-9
Height: 6-12 inches
A maintenance-free groundcover,
pachysandra spreads rapidly by
underground stems to form dense
colonies of dark green foliage. Spikes
of tiny white flowers bloom in early
spring. 'Green Sheen' has patent-

leather looking glossy leaves.



Marsh marigold (Caltha palustris)

Zones: 3–7 Height: 12–18 inches Commonly grown along a stream, bog, or marsh, marsh marigold is a spectacular-looking plant with large, rich-yellow shiny flowers and heartshape leaves. Usually goes dormant after flowering.



Old-fashioned bleeding heart (Dicentra spectabilis) Zones 3-8

Height: 2 feet
One of the finest deer-resistant
perennials for a woodland garden.
Upright stalks are topped with dangling
pink heart-shape flowers. Goes
dormant in summer. 'Gold Heart' has
gold leaves, and 'Alba' sports purewhite flowers.



Spring beauty (Claytonia virginica)

Zones 3-8
Height: 6-8 inches
A truly delicate, native spring
ephemeral featuring loose clusters
of starlike white to light pink flowers
striped with dark pink. Spectacular in
large colonies.



White trout lily (Erythronium albidum)

Zones 3-8
Height: 4-6 inches
A fascinating plant, the white trout lily
has tuliplike green leaves with silverymaroon mottled markings. Because
trout lilies grow well in cool soil
temperatures, they take up nutrients,
releasing them back into the soil when
the leaves die back.



Wild ginger (Asarum canadense)

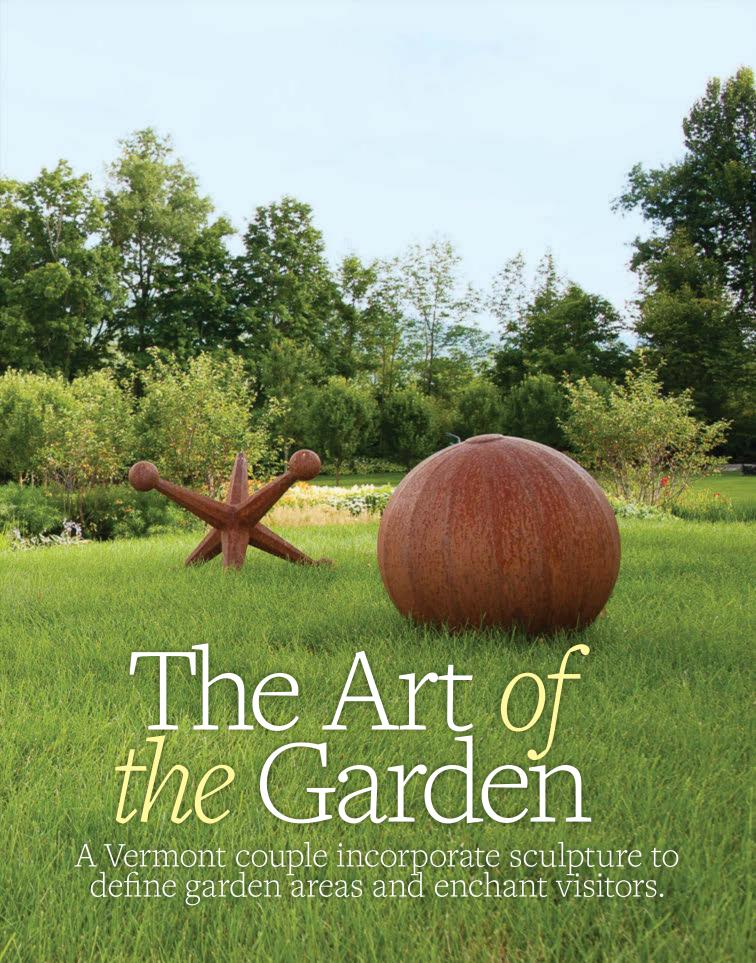
(Asarum Canadense)
Zones 4-6
Height: 6-12 inches
Attractive on close inspection but
usually hidden from view by the dark
green, downy, heart-shape foliage, the
cup-shape, purplish-brown flowers
appear in early spring on short,
ground-level stems.



Woodland phlox or wild sweet William (*Phlox divaricata*)

William (Phiox divaricata)
Zones: 3-8
Height: 12 inches
An invaluable addition to any woodland
garden for its bold shot of color as
it weaves a creeping mat of loosely
entwined stems topped with fragrant,
star-shape flowers. Excellent combined
with late-spring blooming bulbs.

















1. Sylvia Stroup grew up on a farm, yet she readily admits that she avoided helping her mother in the garden because she did not want to go out and get dirty. "That's all changed!" Sylvia says. 2. All the views are carefully planned, including this one of the house as seen from the field. 3. The original gardens were planted in 1930. In the old sections, many of the original old-fashioned varieties, such as yellow trumpet lilies, peach daylilies, phlox, and *Rudbeckia*, continue to grow under the shade of old maple trees. 4. Flocks of wild turkeys know where to find drops from the apple, cherry, pear, and plum trees, thus the name of the farm. At the entrance, an old corn crib was converted into a guesthouse cottage when Petty and Nelson Doubleday owned the farm in 1924. 5. The Stroups' covered summer porch serves as a favorite gathering place for family or for solitude. 6. This reflecting pool offers a serene view of the gardens (and beyond) for family and friends staying in Turkey Hill Farm's guesthouse.

The best advice to any new gardener is to start small and grow big.

That's what Sylvia and Stanley Stroup did 40 years ago, when their first garden was a typical city plot in Geneva, Illinois, comprising less than a quarter acre. They planted the ubiquitous perennial garden with a border of fruit trees to block the road. Stanley's job required them to move frequently, so they left that garden behind and started another.

At each new house, their gardens expanded. When Stanley retired in 2004, they moved to a 68-acre farm in southern Vermont. That's when their vision really began to grow. They purchased

an 1849 farmhouse surrounded by a mature garden designed in 1930, which included a classic sunken rose garden, a cutting garden for flowers, and a well-established kitchen garden with berries. They named their place Turkey Hill Farm, after the flock of wild turkeys that greeted them upon their arrival. The view from the kitchen featured a scrubby pasture, where neighbor's cows peered through the barbed wire fence into their backyard.

Most people would be content with this bucolic view, and Sylvia's plan was to simply renovate the existing gardens to make them her own. "Yet Stanley is a dreamer," she says. The first summer, while Sylvia focused on building a guesthouse for family and friends to visit, Stanley directed a bulldozer to push out the rocks, pruned old apple trees, cut brush, and rebuilt stone walls along















7. A narrow brick path leads the eye to *Gabriel*, a bronze sculpture by New York sculptor Hans Van de Bovenkamp. 8. *Belladonna*, placed near a circular bench, "embodies grace and beauty in nature," says Vermont sculptor Richard Erdman. 9. *Pirouette*, a kinetic sculpture by artist George Sherwood, rotates with unpredictable improvisation when the wind blows. 10. *Continuum*, one of three bronzes by Erdman, was the second sculpture to arrive at Turkey Hill Farm. A wood bridge leads over the stone swale, bordered by tall ornamental grasses to add drama and form to the enclosed space.

11. A bronze sculpture by Thomas Ostenberg, titled ... *but I feel fine*, reflects a search for equilibrium.

the far edge of the property. Sylvia says Stanley's primary goal was to create a grassy lawn to tend. "But the end result was too urban-looking," she says. She tried to soften the expansive green area by planting a dozen ornamental trees and masses of perennials, yet it was not enough to create the intimacy or charm she sought.

The two began to brainstorm, tapping into their shared love of art (Sylvia is avid about quilting, rug hooking, and needlepoint, while Stanley is an active board member of the Southern Vermont Art Center). The art-lovers came up with an idea to define the property and reflect their own aesthetics by incorporating sculpture. They started by dividing the property into garden rooms, and the first of their garden sculptures arrived the following summer. Created by Canadian sculptor

Royden Mills and titled *Inner Key*, this steel artwork made such a profound impact on the wide-open space that it was soon followed by *Continuum*, a bronze sculpture by Vermont sculptor Richard Erdman, which brings a Zenlike quiet crescendo of unending and perpetual motion into view.

They discovered a robust pair of bronze sheep at a gallery in Stowe, Vermont, and brought them to graze in the far field, as a tribute to the original livestock flock.

Placing large sculptures on their property involves bringing in heavy equipment on a tractor-trailer truck and placing sculptures using a crane, so it's key to get the placement right from the start. There is also prep work to be done, using a backhoe to build a foundation of stone or poured cement that will hold the sculpture securely in place.











12. Sylvia is an avid cook and enjoys the daily harvest from her kitchen garden. 13. The entrance to the kitchen garden offers a view of the Green Mountains beyond. Sylvia prefers raised beds for growing her favorite crops: strawberries, broccoli, peppers, and plenty of tomatoes for a year-round supply of sauce. Colorful annuals, ornamental artichokes, and fronds of blue Tuscan kale interspersed with zinnias give the kitchen garden a sense of fun. 14. Collard greens, 'Cut & Come Again' zinnia, and blue larkspur form a perfect harmony of color. 15. Raised beds and crushed stone paths keep the garden tidy and easy to access. 16. The decorative Hartley Botanic greenhouse protects tender plants year-round.

There are currently 12 sculptures on the property, each made of weather-resistant materials such as copper, steel, bronze, or heavily fired ceramic to withstand the harsh Zone 3 winters. Sylvia oversees the planting on the property as well as the general maintenance performed by a longtime gardening couple, Jeannette Morrison and Ernie Dibble. The Stroups seek professional design advice from a variety of landscape designers for each of the garden areas. The gardens at Turkey Hill Farm are regularly included on Garden Conservancy tours, and visitors are given a map of the sculptures, with details about each artist and the concepts behind their art.

Today, the couple can look out from the kitchen table at the 10-plus acres of grassy fields dotted with artful sculptures, ornamental pergolas, a stone-lined arroyo, and mowed walking paths leading the eye through tall grass,

over footbridges, and through the woods into themed garden rooms. Three miles of winding footpaths tie together a pond with an orchard and an upper field and woodlands. "Four generations have lived at this farm," Sylvia says, marveling at the changes the landscape has seen over the years and picturing changes yet to come. "Each year, we either start a new garden area or bring a new sculpture onto the property," she says.

A three-mile path connects the pond to the field and to the woodland gardens, where the paths are mulched with pine straw. While no one can pinpoint the moment that art took on as much importance as ornamental plants and trees in the garden, sculpture has given this couple more than just a hobby. It has transformed every corner of this idyllic garden in a dramatic and artful way.

For more information, see Resources on page 110.









IT BOTHERED SUS MILLER THAT HER FLORA DANICA DEMITASSE SET WASN'T COMPLETE. So when her birthday approached, she dropped several hints within earshot of her husband, Doug. He rolled his eyes and pointed out that their collection of china could already equal a king's ransom. But secretly, he was taking action to find it for her. When the set arrived, Sus went to the sink to rinse it clean. That's when she burst into nostalgic tears. It was signed by her father, Danish artist Henning L. Nielsen.

For Sus as a child, Flora Danica was just her father's trade. Every morning, he left their Copenhagen apartment and went to work in a factory painting porcelain. "It wasn't until I was 16 or 17 that I really started to look closely at it," she says. And then she made the connection with flowers encountered on summer vacations at her grandfather's thatched farmhouse in the countryside. She saw the tiny blossoms, buds, seedpods, and root systems from the woodlands depicted in precise detail on her family's china. Much later, she learned the history behind the teacups, vases, tureens, and plates in the china cabinet. Later still, she inherited her father's private collection of Flora Danica painted specifically for his family.

It all began in 1761 when the botanic garden in

Copenhagen launched an initiative to create an atlas documenting local botany, titled Flora Danica. Continuing for the next 120 years, the encyclopedic effort was originally focused on creating botanical illustrations of Denmark's plants (including mosses and fungi) gathered from the wild, but it was expanded to include Scandinavian natives as borders were remapped. Each illustration was scientifically faithful to the original collected specimen, with all plant parts—including root systems—portrayed. The painstaking art that resulted was also delicately alluring. That haunting beauty sparked the next installment of the story. In 1790, the Danish Crown Prince Frederik devised a brilliant gift to bestow on the Russian Empress Catherine the Great. He ordered a dazzling dinner set with the Flora Danica plant portraits painted on its sides to be fashioned by Royal Copenhagen, his own royal porcelain factory. The project took years. In the meantime, Catherine the Great died in 1796 before the dinner set was presented. That original porcelain set still resides in Copenhagen's Rosenborg Castle—along with the crown jewels—put into service only for ultraspecial royal occasions.

But that wasn't the end of the saga for the Scandinavian floral renderings. Royal Copenhagen survived over the centuries to convert into a private



company (Royal Copenhagen is now owned by Fiskars, the garden tool company). In 1885, Royal Copenhagen took a detour from its signature blue-and-white ware. Following Prince Frederik's lead, the company utilized the *Flora Danica* archives to re-create the original line of botanically adorned porcelain, making it available to the general public. In keeping with the tradition, each piece is hand-painted by artists who apply their meticulous work to an overglaze before the final firing. Sus Miller's father was one of those artists.

As a teenager, the promising young artist Henning L. Nielsen began training in his trade. With years of intense instruction completed, he was ready to tackle the final exam to prove his talents worthy of a position at Royal Copenhagen. The critical assignment was to demonstrate the application of a series of flowers applied to the sides of a curvaceous vase. He selected an aster, primula, veronica, lily, tansy, nasturtium, and morning glory. That completed vase launched his career as one of many artists at Royal Copenhagen who spent their days immersed in the tiny flowers of their region. The vase was his to keep—and it was the first of an everincreasing collection of porcelain that ran through Sus' childhood memories.

One of the perks of working at Royal Copenhagen was an annual allotment of blank porcelain granted to each staff artist to paint for themselves in their spare time. Sus' father worked on other patterns. But solanums, wild orchids, winter aconite, chamomile, dianthus, ranunculus, and violets are

definitely well-represented in the china cabinet.

The result of hundreds of hours of eye-straining work, each teacup, creamer, or saucer bears the Latin binomial of the plant painted beneath its final glaze, as well as the identity of the artist. For his private collection, H. L. Nielsen spelled his name. But generally, signatures were coded—"afx," in his case—and appear below the botanical name and the Royal Copenhagen crown. With dozens of artists, the chances that Sus' demitasse set would be her father's work were slim. But miracles do happen.

The story doesn't end there. Given the teapots, vases, and sugar bowls with meticulously rendered plants running through her life, it isn't surprising that Sus became a gardener. She also inherited a talent for art, discovered only after she retired. What does she most often paint in watercolor? The flowers in her garden, of course.

For more information, see Resources on page 110.





CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: On a triangular custard cup with its own saucer, *Veronica alpina* wends around its angles; A 9-inch undulating cake plate documents the stem, flowers, and fruit of the European pear, *Pyrus communis*. The teacups are adorned with violets and ranunculus; Sus' father chose the marsh lousewort (*Pedicularis palustris*) pattern for the teapot in the family china cabinet with its twig and three-dimensional rose and morning glory handle; *Veronica saxatilis* wanders around the curves of a coffee cup. The 24-karat gold edging was originally polished by diamond tip.





Written by Penelope O'Sullivan Produced by Karin Lidbeck-Brent Photography by Kritsada





TOP: Landscape designer Joyce Williams pops blooming dahlias into an empty spot in the flower border of her garden in Chatham, Massachusetts. **ABOVE:** Joyce tucked Sedum hybridum 'Immergrünchen' into dry cracks of the granite stonework. **ABOVE RIGHT:** A client gave Joyce a division of this yellow-and-purple bearded iris, which she says "spreads politely with a lovely lemon fragrance."

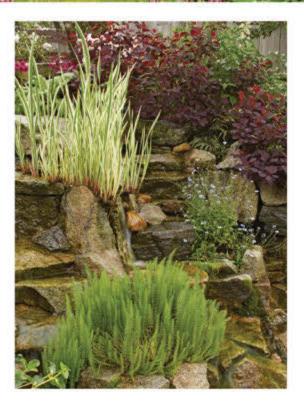


A landscape designer turns a steep, sloping lot into a private Shangri-La.









MOST FOLKS BUY A HOME FOR THE SHELTER it provides, but borrowed views of an ancient freshwater kettle pond bordered by a nature preserve drew landscape designer Joyce Williams to her small Cape Cod-style home. Kettle ponds are formed when a glacier deposits sand and gravel outwash on and around ice blocks. When the ice melts, the outwash caves in, forming holes that eventually fill with rainwater that goes up and down with the water table. The fact that the house "needed lots of work was overruled by its natural setting," Joyce says. She says the water was the real attraction, along with different ground levels suitable for different types of gardens.

Her home is in Chatham, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod, where such landforms are fairly common; it sits on the pond's long, steep bank, which is the quarter-acre lot's best asset and greatest challenge. Joyce came up with an elegant solution, terracing the slope and creating upper and lower lawns connected by 11 steps and a waterfall, all made of granite.

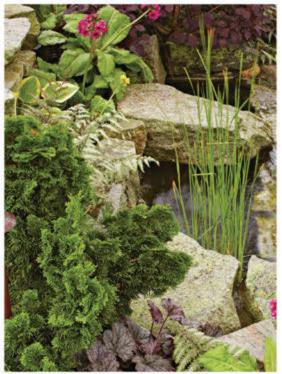
ABOVE LEFT: 'Yaku Princess' rhododendrons, hydrangeas, foxgloves, and peonies line the lawn path to the potting shed. **ABOVE:** Between the deck and the top of the steps is an outdoor shower that lets Joyce rinse off after a day of gardening or swimming in the kettle pond below her house. **LEFT:** Variegated water iris (*Iris laevigata* 'Variegata'), mare's tail (*Hippuris vulgaris*), and true forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*) grow in the waterfall's shallow waters.



The first phase of the design included a brick front walk to replace the old gravel path; a cedar potting shed, now her summer retreat and a focal point in the upper garden; and a 75-foot, boomerang-shape flower border, which defines the transition from the manicured lower lawn to the wild slope and pondside wetlands. Joyce planted the border with traditional spring bloomers such as allium, iris, cosmos, penstemon, and viola. "When I designed the landscape, I thought about what I like, what would work for the site, and what wouldn't be invasive," she says. It happens that birds like what Joyce likes, and many species alight on the lower lawn, including flocks of Redwing Blackbirds.

Joyce installed the steps, waterfall, and a unique outdoor shower 12 years ago, working on the design with J. C. Stahl, a landscape architect and principal of Poetics of Space, who also built the waterfall. "I like natural materials," Joyce says. The steps are locally sourced, reclaimed granite curbing. "The stones in the waterfall are not uniform in size or shape. I wanted

ABOVE: Joyce designed stone steps and a waterfall to deal with the steep change in grade on her Cape Cod property. Joyce softens the stonework by panting shrubs and perennials in and around the waterfall. **RIGHT:** *Primula japonica* 'Carminea' is a moisture-loving magenta-flower candelabra primrose that blooms from late spring to early summer near the waterfall, alongside variegated hosta and Japanese painted fern.





ABOVE: Adirondack chairs overlook stunning borrowed views, including a glacial kettle pond where Joyce likes to swim. **OPPOSITE, FROM TOP:** Instead of cutting back her 'Globemaster' allium after it blooms, she lets it go to seed and become food for the birds. Visitors to Joyce's Cape Cod cottage enter beneath an arch, painted the same blue-green hue as the front door. Prostrate blue spruce (*Picea pungens* 'Glauca Prostrata') grows next to the waterfall, where it thrives in full sun and softens the angular edges of the granite. Foxgloves and 'Emerald Gaiety' euonymus brighten the lawn path to the shed with a window box overflowing with pink New Guinea impatiens and white bacopa.

blocky stones, not rounded, so it looks like an old foundation emerging from the ground," she says. Joyce accentuated their horizontal lines to correspond to the eye's natural direction of movement.

Various plantings soften the sharp angles of the stone. Flowers grow in containers on the steps, and self-sown plants emerge from cracks. Drought-tolerant prostrate blue spruce tumbles over a retaining wall, while in the waterfall moisture-lovers, such as variegated mannagrass, mare's tail, striped water iris, and true forget-me-nots grow submerged in pots and wet planting pockets.

Frequently Joyce and her friends swim in the pond and her dogs play on the sandy beach below her home, so an outdoor shower was a must in her backyard design. The open-air shower she designed sits on axis with the steps and waterfall, which are perpendicular to the mahogany deck overlooking the pond. The shower area, located two steps down from the deck at the top of the rocky stairs, is made of natural stone to unify the landscape. The bronze showerhead was drilled and mounted on a tall granite post. Why not enclose the shower for privacy? "Because I have a beautiful view, I want to shower in the open," she says.

The landscape Joyce created is her haven—"rooms" planted with lush wildlife-friendly natives and perennials, a charming shed for her garden antiques, a shower to make washing off a pleasure, and a stone staircase and waterfall that unify her terraces and offer easy access. "I want to add beauty while blending the gardens with the natural surroundings," she says. "And I want to enjoy them year-round."

For more information, see Resources on page 110.











- 2. Stone steps with succulents
- 3. Shower
- 4. Waterfalls
- 5. Perennial garden
- 6. Birdbath
- 8. Brick walkway
 - 9. Arbor
 - 10. Parking

 - 11. Retaining wall
 12. 'Mayflower' viburnum
- (Pinus rigida)
- **14.** White lilac

rhododendron

- 15. Japanese red maple
- **16.** Foxglove
- 17. 'Blue Ice' cypress 18. White
- **20.** Chokeberry
- (Aronia)
- **21.** Pink rhododendron
- 22. Smoke bush
- 23. Dwarf Hinoki cypress

Written by Marty Ross Photography by Nick Crow



A Plant with a Point

Find a sunny spot for asparagus in your garden, and you'll harvest this essential spring delicacy for years.

GROWING YOUR OWN ASPARAGUS is an investment of time and patience that pays off in tender, delicious spears of success. Plant the root crowns in well-drained soil in a sunny spot in your garden, give them a little attention while they become established, and you should be able to harvest a fine crop of asparagus every spring for 20 years or more.

It will always be the first crop in your garden—and the first few spears taste best right there by the bed, as soon as you pick them, on a cool spring morning. The harvest period lasts for up to eight weeks; if the first half-dozen spears don't make it

all the way to the kitchen, you'll still have plenty of time to experiment with recipes.

Asparagus, of course, is a perennial plant. It is possible to grow asparagus from seed, but most gardeners start with one- or two-year old plants (available at garden shops and through mail-order specialists); they have long white roots that look like tassels, spreading down from a central crown. Popular modern varieties hybridized in the breeding program at Rutgers University in New Jersey are all Jersey boys: 'Jersey Knight', 'Jersey Giant', 'Jersey Supreme', and others are all-male plants, developed for high yield, thick and



uniform stalks, and superior disease resistance. You can still find old-time varieties, such as 'Martha Washington', but they are neither as productive nor as trouble-free as modern hybrids. Older varieties also typically include female plants, which produce bright-red berries but are not desirable because the berries ripen and drop seeds; the seedlings eventually crowd asparagus beds, making them difficult to manage.

Plant asparagus crowns in spring. The planting area should be accessible from all sides; planting along a fence is not a good idea because keeping weeds out of an asparagus bed is crucial for

success, and if you can't reach the planting area easily, weeds will creep in. Dig a trench about 6 inches deep and a foot wide. Make mounds of compost and soil in the trench about 18 inches apart, and set a crown on each mound, fanning the roots around the mound, with the top of the crown about 3 inches below the original soil line. Fill in to just cover the crowns, and water well. If you are planting more than one row, make the rows at least 1 foot (and up to 5 feet) apart: You need to be able to walk between the rows to harvest your crop.

As the shoots emerge, add soil gradually





until the soil level in the row is level with the surrounding soil. Then cover well with compost.

Now the waiting begins. The year you plant, do not harvest any spears. They will grow into ferny foliage that helps increase the size and vigor of the crowns.

The second spring, go ahead and take a few spears, but no more than six from each plant. Each spear should be thicker than a pencil. The third year, you should be able to harvest asparagus for two to three weeks. Cut or break the spears off at soil level when they are 8–10 inches tall and while the tips of the spears are still nice and tight. Harvest until the emerging spears are quite thin,

then stop for the season and let the tall, ferny fronds develop.

Asparagus beetles inevitably find their way to asparagus plants. They eat the foliage, which weakens the plants and makes them susceptible to disease. Control the beetles with insecticidal soap, or plant buckwheat or sunflowers nearby to attract beneficial insects, including ladybugs, that eat the beetles and their larvae. Above all, keep your asparagus bed weeded. Weeds compete with asparagus plants for moisture and nutrients and crowd your crop. Weeding assiduously helps you reach your goal of harvesting more spears than you would ever bother to count.



Citrus-Roasted Asparagus

Oranges add a citrus flavor to this quick and easy side-dish recipe that can be ready in less than 30 minutes.

Prep: 15 minutes Roast: 12 minutes Oven: 400°F

- 2 seedless oranges
- 2 lemons
- 5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 pounds asparagus spears
- 2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 2 teaspoons tarragon leaves

Sea salt and coarsely ground pepper

- 1. Preheat oven to 400° F. From one orange and one lemon, cut 1 /₈ × 2-inch strips, avoiding the bitter white pith; set aside. From same orange and lemon squeeze a total of 2 tablespoons juice; set aside.
- 2. Thinly slice remaining orange and lemon; drizzle slices with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil. Place on baking sheet lined with parchment paper; set aside.
- 3. Wash asparagus; break off woody bases. Place spears in 15×10×1-inch baking pan. Sprinkle with garlic, tarragon, and citrus strips. Drizzle 2 tablespoons of the olive oil; toss to coat spears. Spread in single layer. Season with salt and pepper.
- 4. Roast asparagus and citrus slices
 12 to 15 minutes, turning once or twice
 with tongs, until asparagus is tender and
 citrus begins to brown. Transfer to serving
 platter.
- 5. Meanwhile, for vinaigrette, in small dish whisk together reserved juices and remaining 2 tablespoons oil; season with salt and pepper. Drizzle over roasted asparagus, citrus, and garlic. Sprinkle with roasted citrus slices. Serve warm. Makes 8 servings.

Asparagus-Leek Risotto

Start to Finish: 45 minutes Oven: 450°F for crisp-tender

- 3/4 pound asparagus spears, trimmed
- 2 tablespoons olive oil salt and pepper
- 1½ cups sliced leeks
- 1 cup Arborio rice
- 3 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1/3 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons snipped fresh parsley
- 1/2 teaspoon finely shredded lemon peel
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground coarse black pepper

Lemon Slices Lemon peel

- 1. Place asparagus in single layer on baking sheet. Brush with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil; lightly sprinkle salt and black pepper. Bake, uncovered, in 450°F oven about 10 minutes or until crisp-tender. Cool slightly. Cut two-thirds in 2-inch pieces; set aside all asparagus.
- 2. Meanwhile, in large saucepan cook leeks in remaining olive oil until tender. Stir in uncooked rice. Cook and stir over medium heat about 5 minutes or until rice begins to turn golden brown.
- 3. In another saucepan bring broth to boiling. Reduce heat and simmer. Carefully stir 1 cup of hot broth into rice mixture. Cook, stirring frequently, over medium heat until liquid is absorbed. Then add ½ cup broth at a time, stirring frequently until broth is absorbed before adding more broth (about 22 minutes).
- **4.** Stir in any remaining broth. Cook and stir just until rice is tender and creamy.
- 5. Stir in asparagus pieces, cheese, parsley, lemon peel, lemon juice, and pepper. Top with asparagus spears, lemon slices, and peel. Makes 4 servings.





Asian-Style Asparagus Slaw

This low-cal, low-salt side-dish recipe is loaded with fresh veg.
Prep: 10 minutes Cook: 4 minutes

- pound asparagus
- 4 cups very finely shredded green cabbage
- 1 cup very finely shredded red cabbage
- 1 small carrot, very finely shredded
- 1/4 cup snipped fresh parsley
- 1/4 small red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
- 2 tablespoons sweetened rice vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground white pepper
- 1. Snap off and discard fibrous stem ends of asparagus. Rinse asparagus; drain. Bring 1 inch of water to boiling in a medium saucepan. Place asparagus in steamer basket; cover and steam for 4 minutes or until asparagus is crisptender. Drain. Gently rinse with cool water.
- 2. Combine green cabbage, red cabbage, carrot, parsley, and onion in a large bowl. Toss gently with sesame oil, vinegar, and pepper.
- 3. Divide asparagus spears among six salad plates; top with cabbage mixture. Makes 6 side-dish servings.

For more information, see Resources on page 110.

Country Gardens Spring (March) 2015

Asparagus Basics It's time to plant. Nurture asparagus plants while they are

becoming established for years of delicious spring harvests.



Plant crowns in a sunny place, in well-drained soil enriched with compost. Dig a trench up to about 12 inches deep and one foot wide.



Set the crowns on mounds of soil in the trench. You'll need 25 root crowns for a family of four asparagus enthusiasts; 50 would be even better.



Cover the crowns themselves with soil, but do not fill the trench. You'll be filling it gradually through the season. Firm the soil around the crowns; water well.



Spears are ready to harvest when they are about 8 inches tall. In a mature asparagus bed, you'll be able to pick fresh asparagus nearly every day.



Cut off spears (or break them) at soil level. If you use a knife, be careful not to cut too low, or you could damage the crowns of the plants.



Asparagus foliage grows 6 feet tall or more. Leave it on the plants until late fall or winter, then cut the stems back to about 2-inch stubs.



Common asparagus beetles lay dark eggs that seem to stand on end along asparagus spears. If you see them, pick them off and drop them in soapy water.



Asparagus beetles eat spears and foliage, weakening plants; in a small asparagus patch, you can control it by picking beetles off your plants.



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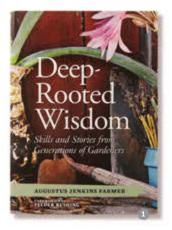
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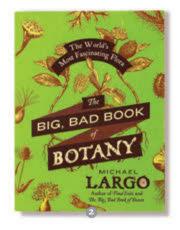
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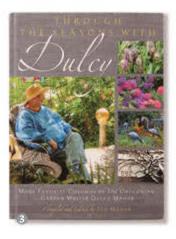
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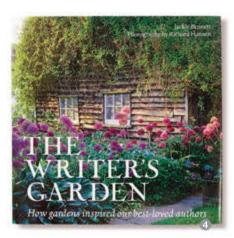
Required Reading

Check out our roundup of recent garden titles.

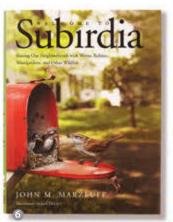




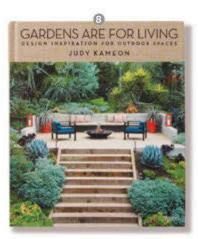


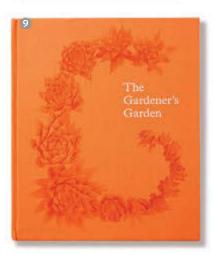












1. Deep-Rooted Wisdom: Skills and Stories from Generations of Gardeners

by Augustus Jenkins Farmer; Timber Press; \$24.95

Augustus Jenkins Farmer, who goes more informally by the name Jenks, has written a book that mines his vast hands-on experience and that of old-time gardeners of yesterday. Common sense abounds in his chapters, which cover topics such as "stacking" (the practice of getting several uses out the same plant), saving seeds of heirloom varieties, and feeding your soil to encourage its mostly unseen web of life. Chapters on hand-watering and gardening without tilling will be eye-opening to many readers. Jenks grew up on a family farm and still gardens on that land today, practicing the techniques he writes about. A world tour before settling back on the family plot allowed him to observe, question, and learn identifying patterns and practices that make for good gardening. This book fits the country gardening ethos well, and

gardeners of all walks can glean solid advice from it.

4. The Writer's Garden: How Gardens Inspired Our Best-Loved Authors

by Jackie Bennett with photography by Richard Hanson; Frances Lincoln Ltd.; \$40.00 Jackie Bennett's latest book takes readers into the private domains of famous British authors and the gardens that might have served as their inspiration. Bennett tells of 20 important literary figures and the gardens they created or where they crafted their writings. Most names will be familiar, such as Agatha Christie, Beatrix Potter, George Bernard Shaw, Roald Dahl, and Winston Churchill. There are grand estates and small village gardens. All, no matter the size, provided sanctuary from the modern world. Surprisingly, many of these successful people who lived in upper-middle-class settings chose to do most of their writing in a simple shed, garden house, folly, or other outbuilding set amid their landscapes, perhaps giving them the privacy and clarity of mind to create with the written word. Included in the back of the book are exact locations and websites of the gardens.

7. Flora Illustrata: Great Works from the LuEsther T. Mertz Library of The New York Botanical Garden

edited by Susan M. Fraser and Vanessa Bezemer Sellers; The New York Botanical Garden and Yale University Press; \$50.00

Imagine if you had two knowledgeable and friendly librarians who took you by the hand and led you through one of the world's foremost collections of gardening and botanical books, introducing you to some rare publications and more than eight centuries of writings. Flora Illustrata is that experience, bound between two hardcovers. Susan M. Fraser and Vanessa Bezemer Sellers, respectively the director of the LuEsther T. Mertz Library and coordinator of the Humanities Institute of The New York Botanical Garden, show the depth and range of the millions of archived documents and items in the library's holdings. The science, horticulture, botany, artistic pleasures, and healing powers of plants are included in this overview. This book is worthy of inclusion in any garden library.

2. The Big, Bad Book of Botany: The World's Most Fascinating Flora

by Michael Largo; William Morrow; \$18.99 The green kingdom is full of oddities: plants with strange human associations, plants with pharmaceutical properties, or those that are just plain delicious to our eyes or palate. Michael Largo, also the author of The Big, Bad Book of Beasts: The World's Most Curious Creatures, covers this and more in his A to Z of entries There are many familiar entries such, as magnolia, lavender, oak, and garlic, while others are less familiar, such as bestill tree, hydrilla, lie detector bean, and rat poison plant. It's the latter that make this book interesting. Despite the word "botany" in the title, the book is not written for a formal scientific audience; for example, plants are listed by common name and not botanical names, although the Latin names are included in each entry. Black-and-white drawings depict a leaf or tree or fruit of selected plants. If you are looking to drop some esoteric facts at your next garden party, then this book might be for you.

5. Remarkable Plants That Shape Our World

by Helen and William Bynum; University of Chicago Press; \$35.00 The world's plant kingdom is overwhelming in its complexity. Our knowledge of plants keeps growing, while new species are discovered and new scientific techniques allow us to look deeper into the chemicals that plants manufacture. Plants excel in making byproducts useful to humans. We can thank the photosynthesis process for turning the sun's energy into so many useful compounds. Though plants have been on Earth for eons, humans not so long, we've fully embraced their usefulness, and it could be said that some have excelled because of our intervention. Helen and William Bynum, both medical and scientific historians, delve into those plants that have impacted the human race deeply in our scant time on this planet. Selections are grouped by purpose: Taste, Technology and Power, Wonder and Nature, Landscape, etc. It's enlightening to learn about so many plants we tend to take for granted.

8. Gardens are for Living: Design Inspiration for Outdoor Spaces

by Judy Kameon; Rizzoli International Publications, Inc.; \$50.00 Sculptural agaves, sheets of succulents that look like coral reefs, brightly colored fabrics, and a 1950s midcentury-modern aesthetic are the hallmarks of the garden design work of Judy Kameon, a Californian who authored this book on alfresco living. Perhaps no other U.S. state better exemplifies this approach to extending the rooms of the house into the garden landscape. In the beautiful photographs illustrating the themed chapters there's nary a cloud, mosquito, or sign of fungal rot. Kameon takes us through the important components of her garden-design philosophy, and you don't have to live in her climate to glean ideas for your own landscape. The gardens depicted are designed around houses typical of the midcentury, and their linear quality makes a perfect partnership. Other architectural home styles might not be as conducive to this modern take on the outdoors.

3. Through the Seasons with Dulcy: More Favorite Columns by The Oregonian Garden Writer Dulcy Mahar

compiled and edited by Ted Mahar; Carpe Diem Books; \$22.95 This, the second collection of Dulcy Mahar's writings published posthumously, is a touching tribute to a self-effacing and beloved Pacific Northwest gardener. Mahar was a garden columnist for The Oregonian newspaper from 1989 until her death in 2011. She had a loyal fan base throughout the greater Portland region and north to Seattle, where the gardening climate is similar. This book will introduce her to a much wider audience. Don't allow regional differences to deter you; here is the voice of a true gardener who was sincere enough to share her triumphs as well as mistakes. With a keen eye she was constantly evaluating her garden, and she used the region's long, wet rainy season to plan anew, something we should all do because it's so easy to become complacent in our gardens. Mahar's writings are full of practical advice.

6. Welcome to Subirdia:

Sharing Our Neighborhoods with Wrens, Robins, Woodpeckers, and Other Wildlife By John M. Marzluff;

Yale University Press; \$30.00 Here's a thoughtful and timely book by John M. Marzluff, the James W. Ridgeway Professor of Wildlife Science at the University of Washington in Seattle. In it, he shares his studies of birds found in and around suburbia—the human-populated and developed zone between urban centers and the open countryside or forest. In this book, you'll learn how birds adapt to human encroachment of their habitats; many species thrive, while a few do decline. Marzluff and his research assistants have tracked populations, and despite conventional wisdom that humans are destroying the birds' environments, some species have adapted and thrive in the suburbs. The diversity of our plantings is key to their survival. It's a web of life that has reconstructed itself in the midst of—and despite our intervention.

9. The Gardener's Garden

Victoria Clarke, commissioning editor; Phaidon Press, Inc.; \$79.95 Coffee-table books can get a bad rap. There are those big books that are strategically placed for all to see in well-appointed homes, with nary a page turned. While The Gardener's Garden certainly fits the description being a large-format book, this is not a book to be placed and forgotten. Here is an important collection of images of gardens from a 21st-century global perspective. Crisp, bright, and colorful, they convey the human desire to create paradise in a myriad of forms. Many familiar public and private gardens are featured, usually given a page or two, with some important gardens garnering more space. It's a perfect book for daydreaming as an armchair traveler, planning a garden trip abroad, or developing your designer's eye. In the photographs you will find a lifetime of garden ideas. Each garden is accompanied by a column of text next to the photos. This book could be displayed on any coffee table with pride.

What are the best plants for pollinators?







Midwest

I'm a big fan of the Xerces Society, which works to protect butterflies, bees, and millions of other important invertebrate pollinators and their habitats through its Bring Back the Pollinators campaign. Pollinators need our help: Most of the world's flowering plants, including many extremely important crops, depend on pollinators. Planting native plants and wildflowers—and avoiding the use of pesticides—is an effective way to help them.

The best plants for pollinators are regional natives. When you're gardening for pollinators, grow plants that bloom from early spring through late fall—from spring's first little yellow clusters of golden Alexander (Zizia aurea) to the last bright blue smooth asters (Symphyotrichum laeve) of October. Besides these, penstemon, milkweed, and coneflowers are all terrific plants for pollinators. The tall prairie blazing star (Liatris pycnostachya), above, which blooms in late summer, belongs in more gardens, including mine: I'm planting it this year. Lots of butterflies, including Monarchs, Swallowtails, Skippers, and Sulphurs are attracted to its purple spikes of bloom.

I have also recently planted mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum muticum*) in my pollinator garden. Matt Bunch, horticulturist with the Giving Grove in Kansas City, which helps establish fruit and nut trees at community gardens, tells me that mountain mint attracts more pollinators than any other plant he can think of. It has dusty silver foliage with a sweet spearmint fragrance, and small pink flowers in midsummer.



Marty Ross lives in Kansas City, Missouri, and writes a monthly gardening column for Universal Uclick.

Mountain

Late-winter food searches are do-ordie events for many bee species. Dwarf nonnative bulbous plants (Tulipa, Iris, Crocus, Muscari, Scilla, Galanthus, to name a few of the most common genera) help augment the paltry native fare that dares to bloom on a sunny day in February or March. By early spring, more natives kick in: pasqueflower (Pulsatilla patens), golden banner (Thermopsis spp.), above, snowball cactus (Pediocactus simpsonii), and green hedgehog cactus (Echinocereus viridiflorus) serve up pollen and nectar for some of the more than 900 species of native bees in our region and for European honeybees. Fragrant golden currant (Ribes aureum, R. odoratum) nourishes bees and is also exquisitely synchronized to bloom when hummingbirds return from their wintering grounds. In late summer and autumn, various North American gayfeather and aster species (Liatris and Symphyotrichum spp.) draw bees and butterflies alike. Sea lavender (Limonium platyphyllum) and sea holly (Eryngium spp.) are exceptional in the variety of beneficial wasps and syrphid flies they feed. Aromatic calamint (Calamintha nepeta), oregano (Origanum spp.), and anise hyssop (Agastache spp.) vibrate from insect traffic; hummingbirds tank up on anise hyssop as well as hardy hummingbird trumpet (Zauschneria garrettii) for their long flight to Mexico and South America. I call our iconic Western native rabbitrush (Ericameria spp.) the last bar open, a mecca for seemingly every pollinating insect just before hard frost.



Lauren Springer Ogden of Fort Collins, Colorado, is coauthor of Waterwise Plants for Sustainable Gardens (Timber Press).

Northeast

Threats to honeybees grab headlines. But the fact is that, apart from farm crops, it is our native pollinators—bumblebees, butterflies, wasps, flies, and even beetles—that do the heavy lifting when it comes to fertilizing flowers and ensuring that there is a next generation in our gardens. Many of these insects also are threatened, and gardeners can do the environment a big favor by making sure that pollinators find a hospitable home in their plots.

Outstanding native American pollinator plants include:

- Bloodroot (Sanguinaria canadensis),
 Mayapple, and violets—These are all early bloomers, providing vital food sources to early season native bees and flies.
- Indian blanket (Gaillardia pulchella)—
 Attracts beetles as well as bees, butterflies, and moths to feed on its nectar. Blooms all summer long.
- Bee balm (Monarda didyma)—Not just for bees but also other nectar-sippers, such as butterflies and hummingbirds. Mid- to late summer.
- Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), above
 —Nectar attracts butterflies; the leaves are
 fodder for monarch caterpillars.
- Cutleaf coneflower (Rudbeckia laciniata)— Long-blooming yellow flowers are a good midseason food source for bumblebees.
- Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*)—A summertime bonanza for bees.
- Aster (Aster, Symphyotrichum, Eurybia),
 Joe Pye weed (Eutrochium purpureum), and goldenrod (Solidago)—These late-season flowers are favorite fall food sources.



Tom Christopher gardens and consults on sustainable lawns and landscapes in central Connecticut.



Northwest

From honeybees and bumblebees to little tachinid wasps, Northwest pollinators work hard. Help them by growing plants that provide much-needed nectar and pollen, and they will return the favor by pollinating fruit trees and vegetables as well as by eating pests. These are arranged by bloom time.

- Winter heath (*Erica carnea*), above— Bumblebees and other pollinators emerge temporarily on those few sunny days in late winter and early spring. Evergreen heath greets them with flowers; try magenta 'Myretoun Ruby' or 'Porter's Red'.
- Laurustinus (*Viburnum tinus*)—This is an indispensable evergreen shrub for the border, as a hedge, or in a pot; it sports small white or pinkish flowers in a round head. 'Spring Bouquet' is fragrant.
- Bleeding heart (*Dicentra formosa*)—Sprays of small pink, purselike blooms hang from arching stems. Plant along the edge of the woodland garden.
- Serviceberry (Amelanchier alnifolia)—This native shrubby tree offers a good hit at early nectar with its strappy white flowers.
- Bee plant (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*)—This is an annual with coiled clusters of lavender-blue flowers with long stamens.
- Thrift (Armeria maritima)—This tough little groundcover grows in clumps of evergreen foliage topped with lollipoplike pink flowers. It blooms over a long season.
- Oregano (Origanum vulgare)—This common culinary herb sports heads of tiny purple flowers in summer. Or plant an ornamental variety, such as O. laevigatum 'Herrenhausen', which blooms into fall.



Marty Wingate writes and gardens in Seattle, when she isn't leading a garden tour to European or North American destinations.



Southeast

Attracting pollinators to the garden provides a feel-good benefit: knowing that you're helping to grow food from the flowers that bring you joy. When gardening with pollinator plants, you go beyond the beauty of blossoms—you witness nature in action.

Hummingbirds feed in flight, hovering in front of a flower and sipping nectar through their extended probosces. Tubular-shape flower heads are ideal. In my garden, old standbys include red crocosmia, cardinal flower, red-hot poker, and the striking salvia 'Dancing Flame'. Hummingbirds are attracted to the color red. Once in the garden, however, hummingbirds will feed on any-color flowers with a shape that suits their needs. Adding blue salvia, cleome, canna, and sage such as 'Indigo Spires' will keep them in the garden all summer long.

Butterflies are looking for something different from what hummingbirds seek; think of it as nature's way to cut down on traffic jams on the wildlife highway. Because butterflies land to feed, they look for blooms where they can easily alight. Butterflies have shown a preference for the color purple, but like hummingbirds, they will sip from any bloom that fits their biology. Try adding umbel-shape flower heads with long-tubed flowers, such as lantana, Joe Pye weed, pentas, and also verbena such as 'Homestead Purple', above. Butterfly bushes are also pollinator magnets; using a sterile cultivar such as 'Blue Chip' is prudent for keeping the plant from becoming invasive. Adding black-eyed Susans, cosmos, cornflowers, and yarrow will help stock the butterfly buffet.



Garden writer Helen Yoest is owner of Gardening With Confidence and caregiver to her own wildlife habitat in Raleigh.



Southwest

The longer I garden, the more excited I get about luring pollinators into my garden. Although hummingbirds get much attention, the heavy lifters of the pollination scene are insects. So how do you get these cool bugs into your garden? By planting what they like. Below are three of my favorite perennial plants for attracting interesting pollinators to Southwestern gardens.

- Sundrops (Calylophus hartwegii), above, is a primrose-family perennial with big, delicate yellow flowers that somewhat resemble petunias. Like many in the family, its blooms open at night and then fade by midafternoon. This allows them to be pollinated by large hawk moths, whose evening antics are almost as fun as those of hummingbirds. Use sundrops like a groundcover adjacent to garden pathways. Zones 5–10.
- Desert milkweed (Asclepias subulata) is a perennial that looks like a succulent. Its stems are blue-green and vertical, and its pale yellow umbel-shape flowers arrive on the tops of the stems spring through fall. These flowers draw scores of metallic blackand-orange wasps called tarantula hawks, which can—but almost never do—sting humans. Use desert milkweed in the middle of perennial beds, next to succulents, or against garden walls. Zones 9–10.
- For attracting butterflies, Gregg's mist flower (*Conoclinium greggii*) has no equal. It is a magnet for Queen Butterflies, which flock to its fuzzy lavender flowers, creating a flutter of activity during the warm months. Provide with moderate irrigation. Zones 7–10.



Scott Calhoun, a fourthgeneration Arizonan, is a garden designer and writer living in Tucson.

For more information, see Resources on page 110.



Plantings: Magnolias Pages 10-12 Magnolia sources include:

Durio Nursery; durionursery.biz; Dalton@durionursery.biz. Gossler Farms Nursery; 541/746-3922; gosslerfarms.com. Greer Gardens; 800/548-0111; greergardens.com. Rare Find Nursery; 732/833-0613; rarefindnursery .com (shipping is not available to California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, or Hawaii). Woodlanders, Inc.; 803/648-7522; woodlanders.net (ship

Klehm's Song Sparrow Farm and Nursery; 800/553-3715;

Breaking Ground Pages 20–21

October through March).

songsparrow.com

Love is Love Farm at Gaia Gardens—900 Dancing Fox Rd., Decatur, GA 30032; loveislovefarm.com. Visit their website for more information about joining their CSA. You also can find them at the East Atlanta Village Farmers Market; for more information, visit farmeav .com. For more information about the East Lake Commons Homeowners Association (owners of the farm), visit eastlakecommons.org.



Compiled by Renee Freemon Mulvihill

Weekend Gardener

Pages 22–23
Rebecca and Jeff Nickols sell their products at the Farmers Market of the Ozarks, 2144 E Republic Rd., Springfield, MO 65804; loveyourfarmer.com. Rebecca also sells birdhouses (including unplanted green-roof birdhouses), bird feeders, and soda-bottle feeder adapters in her Etsy shop, Rebecca's Bird Gardens; etsy.com/shop/RebeccasBirdGardens. For more information about her products, visit rebeccasbirdgardens.com.

Design Notebook Pages 24-27

Landscape architect—Jennifer Bartley, RLA, ASLA, American Potager, LLC, Granville, Ohio; 740/927-7642; americanpotager.com.

For more from Jennifer Bartley, consider:

Designing the New Kitchen Garden: An American Potager Handbook by Jennifer R. Bartley; Timber Press; 2006; 222 pages and *The Kitchen Gardener's*Handbook by Jennifer R. Bartley; Timber Press; 2010; 225 pages.

All-American Daffodils Pages 28-35

Daffodil sources include:

David Burdick Daffodils & More, P.O. Box 495, Dalton, MA 01227; 413/443-1581; daffodilsandmore.com;

david@daffodilsandmore.com. Joe Hamm's Daffodils, 99 Maple Rd., Buffalo Village, Washington, PA 15301; joehamm1@juno.com. South Mountain Flower Farm, 5906 Clevelandtown Rd., Boonsboro, MD 21713; 301/432-4728; mca1062357@aol.com.

For more information about daffodils, contact The American Daffodil Society; daffodilusa.org.

Contain Your Excitement

Pages 36–43 Shrubs—All except Little Honey hydrangea are available through Proven Winners; visit provenwinners.com to find a local retailer. Little Honey hydrangea is available from Lazy S's Farm and Nursery; lazyssfarm.com. Containers Madison—Crescent Garden; 877/477-0027; crescentgarden.com. **Soil** EcoScraps Potting Mix—EcoScraps; 800/537-4815; ecoscraps.com. Liquid fertilizer Manure Tea (Moo Poo tea)—Authentic Haven Brand Natural Brew; manuretea.com.







For more from Karen Chapman, consider: Fine Foliage: Elegant Plant Combinations for Garden and Container by Karen Chapman and Christina Salwitz; St. Lynn's Press; 2013; 160 pages.

A Time-Tested Garden Pages 44-49

For more from Pamela Harper, consider:

Time-Tested Plants: Thirty Years in a Four-Season Garden by Pamela Harper; Timber Press; 2000; 352 pages Designing with Perennials by Pamela Harper; Sterling; 2001; 336 pages.

Color Echoes: Harmonizing Color in the Garden by Pamela Harper; John Wiley & Sons; 1994;

The Do-It-Yourself Garden Pages 50-53 Garden plant sources include:

Bluestone Perennials; 800/852-5243; bluestoneperennials.com. Plant Delights Nursery, Inc.; 919/772-4794; plantdelights.com. , White Flower Farm; 800/503-9624; whiteflowerfarm.com.

Portland's Japanese Garden Pages 54-57

Portland Japanese Garden—611 S.W. Kingston Ave., Washington Park, Portland, OR 97205; 503/223-1321; japanesegarden.com. The garden is open daily yearround (except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day); visit the website for more information about daily hours and admission fees.

For more from Donald Olson, consider: The Pacific Northwest Garden Tour: The 60 Best Gardens to Visit in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia by Donald Olson; Timber Press; 2014; 300 pages.

Boring Begonias? Pages 58-65

Begonia tuber sources include: White Flower Farm; 800/503-9624; whiteflowerfarm.com.

Tiny Worlds Under Glass Pages 66-73 Twig Terrariums—287 3rd Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11215;

718/**4**88-8944; twigterrariums.com.

For more from Michelle Inciarrano and Katy Maslow, consider:

Tiny World Terrariums: A Step-by-Step Guide by Michelle Inciarrano and Katy Maslow; Stewart, Tabori & Chang; 2012; 120 pages.

The Art of the Garden Pages 82-89

For information on visiting Turkey Hill Farm or other private gardens through the Garden Conservancy's Open Days program, visit *opendaysprogram.org* or call 888/842-2442.



For more from Ellen Ecker Ogden, including information about her book, *The Complete Kitchen Garden*, visit *ellenogden.com*.

Garden Collectibles: Flora Danica Pages 90-93

The flagship store for Royal Copenhagen, also known as the Royal Porcelain Factory, is in Copenhagen, Denmark. They ship porcelain, including Flora Danica pieces, all over the world. For more information, visit royalcopenhagen.com. Also look for Royal Copenhagen china on eBay; Flora Danica pieces come up regularly.

Stairway to Heaven Pages 94-99

Landscape designer—Joyce Williams; Joyce K. Williams Landscape Design, Chatham, Massachusetts; chathamlandscapedesign.com; jkwlandscapedesign@ comcast.net. Stonework and water garden design—J. C. Stahl, The Poetics of Space, Chatham, Massachusetts; 508/292-1067; poeticsofspace.net. Garden maintenance—Pine Tree Nursery & Landscaping, 200 Rte. 137, South Chatham, MA 02659; 508/432-8878; pinetreenursery.com.

A Plant with a Point Page 100–104

Asparagus sources include: For Jersey Supreme (crowns) and Jersey Knight (seed): Johnny's Selected Seeds, 877/564-6697.

For Jersey Knight, Jersey Supreme, and Mary Washington: W. Arlee Burpee & Co.; 800/885-1447; burpee.com.

For Jersey Supreme, Territorial Seed Company; 800/626-0866; territorialseed.com.

Grassroots Pages 108–109

johnnyseeds.com.

Midwest sources include:

For golden Alexander, mountain mint, and many other native wildflowers: American Beauties Native Plants; to find retailers in your area, visit abnativeplants.com.

For a variety of native wildflowers: Missouri Wildflowers Nursery; 573/496-3492; mowildflowers.net.

The Xerces Society's extensive website, xerces.org, includes lists of pollinator plants organized by region. (To find the Midwest plant list, look for "plant lists" under the publications tab.) For more information about the Bring Back the Pollinators campaign, visit xerces.org/bringbackthepollinators.

Mountain region sources include:

For golden currant (*Ribes aureum*, *R. odoratum*): Forestfarm; 541/846-7269; forestfarm.com.

Southeast sources include:

For Lo & Behold 'Blue Chip' Butterfly Bush: Proven Winners; visit *provenwinners.com* to find a local retailer.

For Verbena 'Homestead Purple' (also called Purple Spreader Garden Verbena): Monrovia; monrovia.com.

Southwest sources include:

For sundrops (Calylophus hartwegii), desert milkweed (Asclepias subulata), and Gregg's mist flower (Conoclinium greggii): Civano Nursery; 520/546-9200; civanonursery.net.

Over the Garden Gate

Page 112

Garden designer—Lauren Springer Ogden; Plant Driven Design; *plantdrivendesign.com*.

For more from Lauren Springer Ogden, consider:

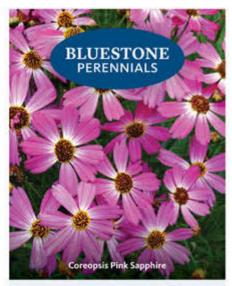
The Undaunted Garden: Planting for Weather-Resilient Beauty by Lauren Springer Ogden; Fulcrum Publishing; 2011; 304 pages.

Plant-Driven Design: Creating Gardens that Honor Plants, Place, and Spirit by Lauren Springer Ogden and Scott Ogden; Timber Press; 2008; 284 pages.



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OVER THE GARDEN GATE

Interview by James A. Baggett Photography by Bob Stefko

Lauren Springer Ogden

Nationally renowned garden designer and horticultural consultant Lauren Springer Ogden promotes beautiful and diverse plantings, sustainability, and site sensitivity. She and her husband, Scott Ogden, design both public and private gardens across the country, spanning USDA Zones 4–10. Her book The Undaunted Garden: Planting for Weather-Resilient Beauty (Fulcrum Publishing; 2010) is the Mountain region's all-time best-selling garden book. She also co-wrote the award-winning Plant-Driven Design and Passionate Gardening. She also has introduced numerous plants into the nursery trade. She and her husband live and garden together (with two Great Pyrenees) in central Texas and northern Colorado.

What is your earliest garden memory?

I was at my parents' feet, so I must have been crawling, with the warm sun on my back. I smelled damp earth, and all around was a sea of little blue stars. I often returned to this spot as a kid; it was down the street at a park where squill had naturalized in the grass around a bench.

What's the best garden advice you've ever been given?

From Marco Polo Stufano, director of Wave Hill and my boss when I worked there as a young gardener, on tending a naturalistic garden. He told me to prune, edit, plant, and trim so it looks better but as if you hadn't been there.

Describe your home garden for us.

I created idealized aspects and plants from mountains, prairies, woodlands, and deserts I love, on just under half an acre, thanks to the crazy microclimates of the Interior West. These allow me to grow trilliums, witch hazels, thalictrums, and magnolias on the north side of my modest-size house, and 50 feet away on the south side I can watch my agaves, cacti, daturas, and shrubby salvias thrive.

What gives you the most pleasure in the garden?

Birds, bugs, snakes, toads, even rodents; translucent bulb blossoms busting out in early spring; crazed foliage colors making the green world ebb away in fall; getting a neglected patch weeded and primped and then looking it over with a drink in hand.

What lessons has your garden taught you?

Some things last but a week, a day, an hour, an instant, never to recur, while others are steadfast, continuing to go on for a gardener's lifetime. I have learned the satisfaction of patience yet to always live in the moment. I'm still not so good with the patient part.

What does being a country gardener mean to you?

Having space and views and connection to the bigger landscape, whether it is natural or agricultural. That gives me some sort of meter and rhyme to my design and plant choices, not just flamboyant art for art's sake. There is context, and there are suggested patterns—and always a sense of belonging to something larger.

What are you currently working on?

The dream project of my career, what I've wanted since I was in my mid-20s, for 30 years now. I'll be designing, planting, and then curating the new half-acre Undaunted Garden at our town's community garden, The Gardens on Spring Creek. I have always wanted the opportunity to create a public garden in my hometown and then to be able to tend it. I have designed a number of public gardens over the years in various sites but have had to watch them be tended, for better or worse, by others. The English know that the best gardens are tended by their creators. We Americans generally disassociate designer and tender, and that's a big loss for all concerned—and for the garden.

You've succeeded in landscaping your garden so you can share the space with a pair of Great Pyrenees. Any advice?

"Succeeded" is a bit optimistic. "Share" is the operative word. They've flattened part of the steppe garden where they play every day. But I love to watch them chase and tumble and rear up and clash like white wolves. They have rid my moist meadow of voles but have dug several large craters in it. They have opened up vistas around several tree trunks where they have destroyed all vegetation in attempt to get at squirrels but have scared off most of those rodents as well. They have taught me the error of some of my paths, and I have modified accordingly. They have respected my little bamboo crosshatching that feebly suggests they stay out of my sacred woodland and rock-garden plantings. They come quietly to nuzzle me and say hello when I'm lost in my own world pulling weeds.

For more information, see Resources on page 110.

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